

OCTOBER

VOL. 20 No. 2

1906

PRICE 25 cts

# THE SMART SET

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ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup>

ESS ESS PUBLISHING COMPANY  
NEW YORK

452 Fifth Ave.

LONDON

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Office of The Smart Set

(ESS ESS PUBLISHING Co.)

452 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK

## To Advertisers:

I beg to announce that the ESS ESS PUBLISHING COMPANY, the publishers of "THE SMART SET," has purchased "TALES."

This magazine met with success from the beginning, and was received with much favor. The growth has been rapid, and we can now guarantee a circulation of more than 32,000 copies each month.

I take pleasure also in informing you that, commencing with the issue of October, the rate for advertising space in "TALES" will be reduced from the present rate of \$100 per page to \$50 per page.

This rate will be pro rata down to  $\frac{1}{2}$  page.

The rate for space of less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  page will be 30c. per agate line.

This rate will be FLAT. No discounts for time or space.

The advertising rate in "THE SMART SET" (more than 140,000 guaranteed circulation) is \$150 per page.

*I beg also to announce a combination rate on "THE SMART SET" and "TALES" of \$175 per page, less 5% for cash. To obtain this combination rate, uniform space in both "THE SMART SET" and "TALES" must be used in issues of like date. If only one magazine is used, full separate card rate will be charged.*

No magazine publisher has ever offered the advertiser such QUALITY and QUANTITY of circulation as that of "THE SMART SET" and "TALES" at so low a rate, whether used singly or in combination.

Respectfully yours,

ESS ESS PUBLISHING COMPANY



ADV. MANAGER.

# HOW COPPER IS PILING UP FORTUNES

By John Hughes

**N**O single industry in the world is now paying as large a profit on the amount of money invested as the copper industry. No single field of activity as this is making fortunes so rapidly, particularly for men and women in the United States. I will tell you why.

During the last score of years the copper mines of the United States and Mexico have paid in actual dividends \$300,000,000. Since January 1 of this year ten copper companies alone have distributed in earnings nearly \$19,000,000. The fact is that copper mines are paying one-half of the total dividends paid by the entire mining industry.

The mining of copper is making more millionaires than any other industry in the world, and is making them quicker. One mine in Arizona is paying annually \$10,000,000 in profits and has made millionaires of its stockholders. Several copper mines in Arizona and Mexico are paying from 100 per cent. to 3,300 per cent. on an investment made only a few years ago. The man who invested \$1,000 in the Calumet & Arizona of Arizona, four years ago, now has a snug fortune worth \$33,000 and is receiving in annual dividends the sum of \$4,800.

No metal of all metals is in such demand in the whole world as is copper. The enormous increase in the consumption and the rise in price of this metal have been coincident with the vast extension of the uses of electricity throughout the United States and Europe. The consumption of brass is growing rapidly and brass is two-thirds copper. The growing consumption of this metal can bring about but one result, and

that is the continual rise of the price of copper and the rapidly growing profits of those who own stocks in copper mines. These are vital facts to those who wish to make investments that will pay certain profits and the largest profits possible. A copper mine is a plain, commercial proposition, not a speculation.

The richest copper section in the world is the Sonora Copper Belt. It extends through Arizona and across the Mexican border, southward through the State of Sonora, Mexico. On it are some of the most productive and profitable mines that the world has ever known. Among these are the United Verde, owned by Senator William A. Clark of Montana, which pays \$1,000,000 a month; the Copper Queen, which earns \$10,000,000 a year; the Calumet & Arizona, paying dividends of \$2,400,000 a year; the Greene Consolidated, which earns and distributes to stockholders a like amount; the Shannon, the Old Dominion, and others. These are a few of the mines of the Sonora copper belt which are heaping up fortunes for those who bought their stocks when these mines were beginning operations.

Sonora, Mexico, has richer and larger deposits of copper than those of Arizona. E. H. Harriman, the prominent railroad magnate of the United States, and the Phelps-Dodge Company, owners of the great Copper Queen and other rich mines and large smelters in Arizona and Northern Mexico, are now rapidly constructing railroads which are opening this new, rich copper field to enormous mineral operations. Their railroad construction has started a



rush of mining men to Sonora, Mexico, and the best mines are fast being taken up. Among the largest and richest properties in Sonora is that owned by the Anaconda Sonora Copper Company, which is composed of a number of prominent business men of St. Paul and Chicago. Already in this property \$5,250,000 worth of ore has been blocked out, and it was located before this active railroad construction began. The opportunity which the Anaconda Sonora Copper Company accepted then does not exist in the State of Sonora now.

To make large profits on a small outlay of money in copper, one must purchase shares from a company which has just begun operations, but which can prove that it has great deposits of the metal and which is selling its shares at a low price in order to obtain funds to purchase equipment and enlarge its operations. After it begins earning money from its own production, the stock in such a company cannot be bought excepting at a very high price. The men who control the Anaconda Sonora Copper Company have offered to the public a small number of shares at a low price, to add to the sum which the members of the Company themselves invested for the purpose

of completing their equipment at the property. It would be well for you to write to Mr. William S. Barbee, Secretary and Treasurer, 827 National Life Building, Chicago, and ask for information concerning the opportunities in Sonora, Mexico, and the Anaconda Sonora Mine. This property has already attracted wide attention in mining circles because it has such large bodies of ore of a very high grade.

NOTE:—The advancing price of copper and the growing demand and consumption of the metal have made copper mines, particularly those in the new field of Sonora, Mexico, the most sought after of all mineral properties. English, German and American syndicates have endeavored to purchase the Anaconda Sonora mine outright, after they had examined the property and its ores; but the owners have refused to sell because they desire to keep it for their stockholders and themselves, making it a source of large and regular income for themselves and their estates. Mr. Barbee can give you documentary proof of all that has been said above, if you write to him now. The Company is sound financially; its control is in the hands of men of the highest personal and business standing; and it is preparing rapidly to produce earnings on an extensive scale.

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**M**ORE than two million American children, the majority of whom are under twelve years of age, are compelled by dire necessity to labor long hours in dismal factories—for what?—their daily bread, bare sustenance. Theirs is life without laughter and play; life robbed of its childhood and school; while they toil merely for the privilege of *such* life.

We send missionaries to enlighten the pagan Chinese and the savage African, but do not we also need enlightenment—some ray of wisdom which shall show us that, in stealing from childhood its years of play and companionship, its school and growth, we are robbing the nation of its future?

Have we, as a nation, while physically brave, retrograded to mere moral cowards—too fearful of disturbing the commercial equanimity of a few money-grubbers? Or shall we halt the iniquitous system of "child labor" and give the nation's future citizens and mothers a chance to be real citizens and mothers?

In October COSMOPOLITAN is the second of the Markham series of articles—"The Hoe-Man in the Making." The first article (in September) was entitled "The Child at the Loom." In October COSMOPOLITAN is "Child-Wrecking in the Glass-Factories."

Read what Edwin Markham, author of "The Man with the Hoe," has to say: his message is a message for all good citizens.

## PANAMA—THE HUMAN SIDE

By  
POULTNEY BIGELOW

Last year Mr. Bigelow went down to Panama. What he saw he told about, and set the Government by the ears. Officialdom said he was superficial—but the President is going down to investigate for himself.

COSMOPOLITAN sent Mr. Bigelow back, and he made an even more careful investigation. Read COSMOPOLITAN for the results—and be surprised.

## WHAT LIFE MEANS TO ME

By  
UPTON SINCLAIR

The author of "The Jungle," which startled the world with its exposure of the Beef Trust crime, tells COSMOPOLITAN readers what life means to him. He feels that he has a mission in life which "The Jungle" has only in part fulfilled. In October COSMOPOLITAN he tells what his work shall be and how he has accomplished the part already done.

# OCTOBER COSMOPOLITAN

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**QUICK STUDY.** By Warren Bell.  
**MISS WINSTON'S WEDDING DAY.** By C. C. Andrews.  
**THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL.** By Geo. A. Best.  
**THE PRIVATEERS.** By H. B. Marriott Watson.

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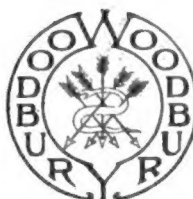
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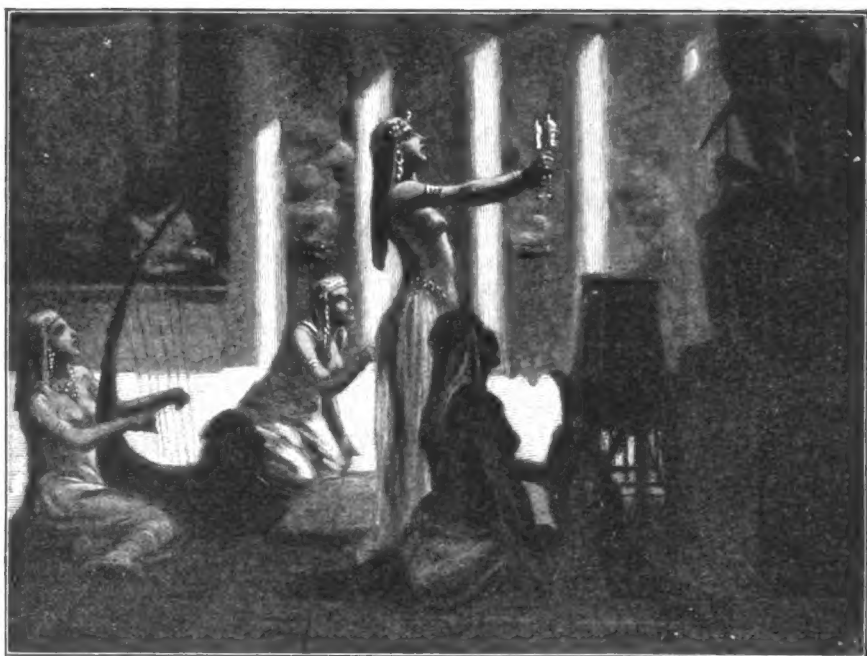
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# THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. XX

OCTOBER, 1906

No. 2

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## THE NOVEMBER "SMART SET"

*It is not often that so striking a story comes to an editor's desk as that which opens the next number. It deals in a powerful way with the emotional side of a woman's nature, and moves rapidly to its dramatic and unforeseen conclusion. Every reader will follow with interest this really great novelette, entitled*

### **"THE CONFLICT," BY EMMA WOLF**

*A story by JACK LONDON will be one of the features of the November issue; and RICHARD LE GALLIENNE will contribute one of his most delightful essays, happily called "The World and the Lover," a piece of writing as exquisite as anything the author has done. Other contributors will be Inez Haynes Gillmore, Dorothea Deakin, Grace Mac Gowan Cooke, Ellis Parker Butler, Harriet Gaylord and Mary Tracy Earle.*

*Poems by favorite writers will also appear.*

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WILLIAM GREEN, Printer, New York



# THE RULES OF THE GAME

By William R. Lighton

WHEN I got to my desk this morning the big clock in the city-room had a good twenty minutes' running start of me. Yesterday it was a half-hour, and the day before that—well, here I may as well say right now that it's a long time since I turned out in the cold gray dawn for my last breakfast of early worms. I don't like that food. You're always liable to get it served up to you only half cooked, by a waitress that's sleepy and cross, with her shoe-strings untied and her face showing that she hasn't had time yet to take her morning dip in the Bloom of Youth box. Besides, I've noticed that the early worm eaters are mostly a lean and hungry-looking lot, as if there wasn't enough in the dish to go around, and I always feel that I'm depriving somebody. No, sir, the early worm isn't my kind of grub. You give me a nice late bird, with a few of those fly-by-night side dishes, and I'll pass the early worms along to those that need 'em—and welcome.

Well, as I started to tell you, the clock seemed to have left me at the wire this morning. I didn't care for that. I never pay much attention to clocks, anyway. They mean well, but they're humdrum. If they're the well-regulated kind that always do what's expected of them, you always know exactly what to expect them to do, and that makes them tiresome. I don't believe there was ever a man yet who worked by the clock and got anything done worth doing. Here: Suppose that when General What's-his-name captured Hong-Kong, or Copenhagen, or whatever the place

was, he had said to his little old army: "It's no use, boys. This thing was scheduled for ten o'clock this morning, and it's away past noon now. We'll have to give it up." What? You run across that kind of grandmas sometimes; but you don't often find them setting any very wet rivers on fire, now do you? No. You take a real great man and let a steady-going old fool of a clock get to nagging at him: "It's time to begin—it's time to quit!" Pretty soon Mr. Man says: "Oh, shut your face! Time to quit, is it? Why, you stiff, I'm just getting started, and I'll quit when I get good and ready." I tell you your real great man is the one that never thinks about clocks except when he doesn't know what else to buy for a wedding-present for his dude nephew out in Chanute, Kan.

So when I saw our city-room clock this morning dog-trotting along toward the first turn, kind of looking back at me over its shoulder, it didn't worry me. "Go ahead!" I said. "You're kicking up a heap of dust now, smarty; but when I'm coming down the quarter-stretch this afternoon I'll have you distanced."

I made a cigarette, stuck my feet up on my desk and started in to read the morning editions before I looked to see what was hanging on my hook. There was lots of time; nobody in the bunch was doing anything excepting Stockton, who was messing with some galleys of last night's overset. When I get to be city editor you're going to see me send the overset hook to the antique shop, along with the brass door-knockers and the old Dutch candlesticks. That's where it belongs.

October, 1906 —1

After a piece of news has died it's dead, isn't it? But old Stockton never seems so solemnly happy as when he's brooding over the corpses of the dear departed stories that got squeezed to death in yesterday's make-up. He's a queer chap, Stocky is. But I've got to say for him that he certainly knows a real live story, too, when somebody holds one up close to his face so he can see it through those moon goggles of his. What I've started out to tell you is about one time when I had all the rules of the game to learn yet, and when he laughed and damned me safe through the worst of the learning. We're friends for life, that old boy and I are. He's half blind, and lame, and he stutters, and he doesn't hear very well, and his memory's bad at times; but he's a *man*.

Well, pretty soon Stocky had got all that dead oversight stuff killed again with his blue pencil. Then he took a peek at the assignment book; and then he got up and limped along the row of reporters' desks, squinting to see if we were all there. When he got to me he stopped and stood still a minute, sucking in his lips and running his hand over his bald pow and blinking his weak blue eyes at me.

"There was sus-something I wanted to sus-sus-say to you, Tut-Tut-Tommy," he sputtered. "Tut-Tut-Tommy" is the name I go by around the place. I used to feel sore about it some, but it's all right now; it's a kind of a badge of distinction, since it comes from him. "I fuf-fuf-forget what it was now," says Stocky. "Oh! The Old Mum-mum-man wants to sus-see you. Gug-go in before you gug-go out." And with that he shuffled back to his desk.

Billy Strong, that sits next to me—"Bub-Bub-Billy"—was putting some new leaves in his pad-book. "Uh-huh!" he said. "Did you hear that, Tut-Tut-Tommy? You will keep on busting the rules, will you? I've been expecting this for quite a spell."

I hadn't then. "What the dickens?" I thought to myself. "It can't be my innocent little slips of lateness. How would Jordan know

anything about it? Stocky wouldn't tell him; if Stocky thought I needed a jacking-up, he'd give it to me himself. Then what else have I done?" You know how it is: When a man on the city-staff gets called into the managing editor's room he's always safe in figuring that there's something wrong.

It was a long time after I came on the *Journal* before I could make out what a managing editor was for, anyway. Jordan never seemed to do anything except to come poking around after the paper was off the press and make a roar about things when it was too late. I couldn't see that it took a high-priced genius to do that; and yet Jordan got twice Stock's pay. It didn't look fair. Nobody ever saw him with his tired face all smudged over with ink and dirt, and his collar wilted to a sopped rag, and his eyes hollow and hot with trying to keep things going right among a dozen rebellious young hellyons, each one with a different grouch on. That was Stocky's job. Nobody ever saw Jordan shaking with a nervous chill, ten minutes before press time, with the copy-tube whistle shrieking its head off three times a minute, and the make-up man hopping up and down the room on one foot in his sweat-soaked flannel undershirt, swearing like a whole gang of pirates, and with every crazy one of us battering away on his typewriter over a big, important story that couldn't possibly be finished inside a quarter of an hour. That was Stock's job, too.

None of that for Managing Editor Jordan. Most likely he'd been over at Shafer's bowling-alley ever since noon, or out at the golf grounds, or fooling around some other place until he knew the paper was on the street. Then when the convulsion was over and the bunch of us would be sitting there, hungry and thirsty and mad and tired, ten to one he'd come strolling in, clean and cool and comfortable, with a copy of the paper in his hand and jump onto poor old Stocky with spiked shoes: "Here, Jim, this front-page local politics is all wrong. You ought to know the attitude of the sheet bet-

ter than that"; or, "Say, what's the matter with your city staff? The *Herald* has got us skinned to death today. Can't you wake your men up to the fact that this isn't amateur journalism?"

That seemed to be the way he earned his seventy per; so you can see how it was this morning when I was saying to myself, "What kind of a jackpot have I got into now?" But I couldn't think of the right answer; and after a bit, when the gang were trailing out to their morning runs, I turned up the hall to the ground-glass door at the front end, feeling fidgety and uncertain.

The Old Man was sitting there, tipped back in his big easy-chair, with a stack of morning papers in front of him, and he was just lighting one of his own particular imported Manila Rink-tum Perfectos. He wiggled the match in the air to put it out before he dropped it in his waste-basket. Then he looked at me over the top of his gold eye-glasses.

"Hello, Burke!" he said. "Come in a minute." That's the way he talks. Stocky stutters; but not Jordan. When Jordan's got anything to say it sounds as if it had been set up with all the quads dropped, like a pi-line. "Come in a minute, I want to talk to you, sit down, have a cigar."

Let me tell you that you don't get those cigars out of a slot-machine. The fact is, I'd never seen one sticking out of anybody's face but Jordan's; the nearest any of us had ever got to enjoying one was when the Old Man would saunter down the hall or through the city-room, letting a thin little cloud of the purple smoke trail along behind him; and the smell of it always made me think of the time when I'd be retired and living on the income from my big fortune. Understand, Jordan's no hog; he gives away barrels and barrels of smokes; but those long, thick, crooked, beautiful, ugly black boys in the inlaid Japanese box he always keeps as if they were sacred little religious godlets it would be a mortal sin for anybody but him to touch.

And yet there was I, little old Tut-

Tut-Tommy Burke, leaning back in a deep leather chair in the holy Front Room, with one of his immortal perfectos clamped between my dog-teeth, and there was the Old Man scratching a wax match on the side of his oxidized silver box and holding it out for me to get a light. Maybe you think he didn't have me going! My cigar trembled so he had to strike another match before I could get it started. But Jordan didn't let on he noticed.

"Say Burke," he said, "how long have you been with the *Journal*?"

"Two years," I told him; "just two years last pay-day."

"Is that all? I thought it was longer than that. Well, Jim gives me a good account of you. We appreciate good work. I'm reorganizing the staff, getting ready for Winter. How would you like to go to the legislature for me?"

"What's that?" I asked him, in a kind of a far-away whisper; so he said it again:

"I say, how would you like to go to the legislature for me this Winter?"

My jaw dropped open, so it let my cigar fall onto the floor. *Me!* The newest man to the business on the staff, with only two years' experience since the time when I didn't know the difference between a slug-head and a "People You Know" item in the column back next to the baking-powder advertisements. I couldn't take it in. "Here," I said to myself, "this is about the worst dope-spell you ever had. You're going to be horribly disappointed when you wake up." But I caught the look on the Old Man's face, and it kind of brought me out of it.

"Sure, if you think I can do it right," I said.

He laughed—a kind of a snappy, short laugh. "I wouldn't task you otherwise. You'll get along all right. You've done some creditable work. This will be an important session. The *Journal* must cover it thoroughly. It'll be good training for you. Giddings will be chief of the legislative staff. He's a good man. Do the best you can to learn what he can teach you. Next year I'm going to send Giddings



to Washington. Then if you're fit you can have his place at the state capital."

Now, what do you think of that? I sat there listening, cold all over, excepting a little blaze of white-hot fire right in the middle of my mind, and not able to say a word. I didn't pay attention to all he said; I couldn't; but after a bit I heard him say something that sounded like "thirty-five dollars a week and expenses this Winter"; and then at the last he shot this at me:

"This session begins the first of January and you'll go over the middle of December to get onto the ropes and you'd better take a couple of weeks off in the meantime to get freshened up and ready for some hard work. That's all. Good luck!"

I don't know what I said nor how I ever found the door and got out of there; but I do know that my feet never touched the floor all the way down the hall. There's nothing in this world like it—loving your work, I mean, so you're willing to put your whole mind and heart and soul into it, and then having somebody that *knows* say to you, "Well done!"

It wasn't the Old Man's flattery that caught me, nor the new job, nor the bigger pay, nor the talk about another boost later on; it was miles and miles finer than any of that. He had been watching me, and he understood. When I got back to the dingy city-room the dirty, littered floor looked as if rose-colored flowers were blooming all over it, and the hot stench from the melting-pots downstairs smelled like a warm, perfumed South wind in Spring.

Stocky was alone, bending down over his desk, pottering at something or other, with his poor old nose almost touching the paper. I didn't say anything; I just walked up to him and blew a mouthful of rich, oily perfect smoke down in front of him where he could smell it. He smelled it all right, but he didn't catch on. It fooled him. He didn't look up, but scuffled his feet on the floor, making a sign that he didn't want to be interrupted.

"Just a mum-mum-minute, Jordan," he growled.

But I couldn't wait, not to save my soul. "Stocky, you old rip!" I yelled. "This ain't Jordan; it's me. Say, look here, did you know what was going to happen in the Front Room when you sent me in there?"

He let his work go then, tipping back in his battered chair and squinting at me with the most beautiful smile wrinkling his ugly, blessed old face. Stock isn't a handsome man, any time; but by the Lord! when he gets that expression on him he's beautiful.

"Oh, it's you, Tut-Tut-Tommy!" he stuttered. "Well, I wish you'd kuk-kuk-quit calling me those disrespectful names. I used to gug-go on a tear once in a while, bub-but I've never been a rip."

"You answer my question," I told him. "Did you know what was going to happen to me in there?"

"Happen?" he grinned. "I hope it wasn't anything sus-so awful tut-terrible."

I'd got hold of his hand by that time, and was squeezing it hard and wagging it up and down. "Of course, you knew! You're the one that did it. It wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for you. Don't you suppose I know?"

He stopped fooling then, and the solemn, tired look came back to his face. "I'm gug-glad you like it, susson," he said. "I reckon we understand each other pup-pretty well. It'll give you sus-something new to think about, and every young fellow nun-needs that once in a while. You won't fuf-fuf-forget what I've tut-taught you, though, will you?"

"Who? Me? Forget? Stocky!"

"Oh, I nun-nun-know you won't." He got up out of his chair, leaning against the desk to ease his bad leg, and putting his big arm across my shoulders. "Of kuk-course you won't! You're gug-going to bub-be a credit to the pup-pup-profession, if you remember. It's a good game, so long as you mum-mind the rules—fuf-fit for anybody to give his life to; bub-but if you overlook the rules— Oh, you understand!"

Stocky has given his life to it, all

right. He's sixty-eight years old, and he hasn't a soul on earth of kith or kin to look after him and keep him jollied up while he's getting ready to shoot the chute. He hasn't any money—he's squandered it all as fast as he's earned it, giving it away to all kinds of dubs that happened to be down on their luck; and he's got no fame nor credit nor any of those things you measure success by. And yet that old duffer could stand there and talk to me like that! It gives me the willies to think about it, when I know how hard he meant it. And the very worst of it is that the men he's done it for, keeping himself poor and threadbare and steadfast and obscure—they've forgotten. The town's full of 'em, but I'll bet my life they won't turn out a corporal's guard at his funeral. It makes me boil.

"I reckon I'll mum-miss you," Stocky said. "I wish I could pay enough on the city work to kuk-keep some of my kud-kids with me, after I've raised 'em. I dud-don't like it. Bub-but it's all right. If you train up a child in the way he should go, you oughtn't to kuk-kick when he goes, ought you?"

I felt a cold chill come over me. I'd been so busy gloating over my own fool luck that I hadn't thought for a minute about his side of it. I knew he was fond of me—he's shown it often enough; but it simply hadn't come to me at all that I was going away and leaving him to his lonesome, dirty job, getting older and deafer and blinder and lamer every day, with me not there to help him out the way I'd been doing.

"Stocky!" I said. "Look here, I ain't crazy for this job. If—if you—Why can't Jordan——?"

"Gug-Gug-God A'mighty, no!" he said. "You young idiot! Hell's fuf-fire. Don't you go getting the nun-notion that you're indispensable to me or anybody else." But there was a pleased blush on his wrinkled face, just the same, and he pushed up his specs and dug his knuckles into his eyes, with a stagey kind of laugh. "Go on about your bub-business, or

I'll be dud-disgracing myself. Gug-God bless you, Tut-Tut-Tommy! Now gug-get out!"

Well, I went down to the street and moseyed around for a while, not having any place to go nor anything to do—just moving fast enough to keep warm, and trying to think. Trying, but not doing it. I simply couldn't sense what had come to me. I can't yet, quite.

By-and-bye I saw Bub-Bub-Billy coming along up the street on that dog-trot of his when he's chasing a story. I turned up my coat collar, dug my hands in my pockets and stood with my back against a telephone pole, fetching a discouraged look and waiting for him.

"Hullo!" he said when he saw me. "What the devil! Was it—? What did the Old Man do to you?"

"Laid me off a couple of weeks, till I could break up some of my habits."

"You don't say! Huh! That's tough, Burke. What right has Jordan to butt in on Stocky's say-so? That's a devil of a note. Two weeks! Say, got any money?"

"Oh, I'll worry through, I reckon. If I get up against it, I'll let you know."

"Sure! Come and get a drink."

"Drink! Drink! And he laid me off to break up my habits? You're a nice friend!"

"All right, then. I'll see you later." And he was off again on his swift waddle. It seemed a shame to play it on him; but I owed Bub-Bub-Billy a few.

## II

THIS morning was mighty different from that other morning two years ago, when I went into the city-room of the *Journal* to report to Stocky for my first assignment. We had never seen each other until that minute. A friend of my dad's had fixed it with him to give me a "trying out." It pleased me then to hear how willingly the old boy had agreed; it made me think he must have been keeping his

hungry eyes on me in High School; most likely he'd been one of the enraptured listeners to my Commencement oration on "The Idealist in American Industrial and Political Life." How was I to know that he had said "Yes" simply because he couldn't find it in his heart to say "No" to anybody that asked any kind of favor of him? I found that out afterward.

Before the time came for me to go on I spent a week of rosy days and nights figuring out how it was going to be when I loomed up and let him know who I was. "Oh, yes!" he was going to say. "Mr. Thomas Burke! I am honored in making your acquaintance, sir." And then he was going to take a half-hour off and go around introducing me to the staff as "the brilliant young authority on politico-economic subjects, whom we are fortunate in securing as a writer for our editorial page." And after that he was going to conduct me to my luxuriously furnished private room, secluded from the crowd, where senators and governors were to come and offer humble suggestions while I was engaged upon the noble labor of moulding public opinion, leading it on and on, irresistibly, to lofty, clear heights of—

Oh, yes, yes! Just so. Only that wasn't the way of it.

When I went in the bunch was over around the big desk in the corner, looking discontented and sore—just the way any respectable bunch will, about every so often. They'd been doing some talking, I reckon; but they were listening then; listening to a big, bald, ugly chap in his shirt-sleeves, with his collar off, who sat there, humped forward over his desk with his spectacles sliding down his nose and an Expression on his face. You just naturally dislike that Expression of his the first time you see it; but after that your dislike gets swallowed up in respect. Don't I know? He didn't look mad or worked up or worried; he was just serious, with his thick eyebrows pinched up in a knot and his lips pulled back wide from his big, yellow teeth.

"I like you boys, fuf-first-rate," he was saying, with his voice a quiet dead-level. "But when I'm here on this dud-desk my love's got to be kuk-kept sort of dud-disinterested, see? Nun-now, look here: I'm not playing any favorites, and I'm not gug-going to. I'm going to mum-make every man of you work as hard as he can without bub-breaking down, and I won't raise anybody's pay till nun-next year. Listen: I dud-don't want any insurrection. If you start one, I'll put it down, and I'll bub-be likely to take the surest way—kuk-kuk-killing off the insurrectionists, every last one. Nun-now, then: You fuf-fellows think it over till after pup-press time."

With that the bunch kind of dwindled away, one at a time, some of the boys scuffling back to their desks and others slouching out to the street. They didn't seem to get any cheerfuller; but there wasn't any back-talk. It looked to me as if everything had been said that anybody could think of right then.

The big man had a stack of copy on the desk in front of him, and he picked up a thick blue pencil and went at it, bending down with his nose almost touching it, striking out a line or changing a word, or making swift funny circles and crosses and loops like those you'll see in the appendix over back of the dictionary. Nobody seemed to be paying any attention to me; they had clean overlooked me, somehow, leaving me standing in the middle of the floor, trying to account for it to myself.

Pretty soon I went over and stood beside the big man's desk, holding my hat in my hand and waiting until he raised up to flip a sheet of his copy over on the finished pile. Then he saw me, out of the corner of his eye, and held out a sort of an absent-minded left hand toward me, with his right hand still chasing along the type-written lines, putting in a comma and patching up a misspelled word. It looked to me like pretty careless manners toward distinguished visitors; but



what would you have done? I took his left hand and shook it.

He seemed surprised, turning around and squinting up at me, his face in a pucker of hurry.

"Dud-don't get funny with me, kid," he said. "Gug-give it here, kuk-kuk-quick."

"My name is Burke," I told him. I thought that would fetch him; and it hurt me dreadfully to see that he never turned a hair.

"Is it?" he asked. "Well, what about it? Ain't you the kuk-kid with those half-tones?"

"No, sir." And then I said it over again for him distinctly: "My name is Burke."

"Bub-Burke," he said after me. "Let's see: 'Bub-Burke' comes under the 'B's' in the dud-directory, dud-don't it? You'll have to explain the rest of it to me, son."

"Thomas Burke," I explained; and when his face didn't show any glad intelligence: "Judge Snyder, you know. He told you about me. You said you would give me a place on the *Journal*."

He gave a short groan of remembrance. "M-m-m! I'd fuf-forgotten. But that sounds as if I mum-might have said it. Lord! I don't need any more men. Sit down a mum-minute till I gug-get through with this."

It was a good long minute, but I was grateful for it, as I sat there looking around the cluttered room and taking my first deep breath of the smell. You know what it is, that smell; it stands by itself; there's no other like it this side the Pit; the hot ink, and the damp paper, and the last week's tobacco, and the dust, all mixed together, with a faint flavor of yesterday's excitement and a ghostly hint of the excitement that's coming tomorrow. I didn't like it at first; it suffocated me; but it's the breath of life to me now, just as the torn, strewn, dirty paper-litter and the smoke-smudged walls and the scarred, untidy desks are the most inspiring picture in the world, and just exactly

the right setting for a gang of tired, excited fellows sweating their souls out for the honor and glory of doing their work the best they know how and getting no credit for it. I can see those things now, though I couldn't then; then there wasn't any room in my mind for anything excepting my hurt wonder and the wish that I hadn't come. The more I looked at the big, shirt-sleeved, stuttering chap the worse I didn't like him.

After a bit he straightened up in his chair, scraping his feet on the floor and slapping his desk with the flat of his hand.

"Strong!" he called out. "Is Bub-Billy Strong here?" And when a short, fat lad came up to the desk, with his cap pulled down over his sulky face: "Bub-Billy, dud-don't you remember what I said to you about this grain-rate story?"

"I remember," Billy growled; "but——"

"You haven't dud-done what I tut-told you."

"But——"

"The whole thing's unfair. You're using the paper to pup-put Sutton wrong, just bub-because you've gug-got it in for him."

"But——"

"'Bub-but!'" the big man flared out. "'Bub-but!'" Why dud-don't you say 'Bub-Ba-a-a' once, for a change?" He chucked some sheets of paper across the desk. "This story dud-don't go. Write it over and gug-get it right."

It took Bub-Bub-Billy twenty minutes to do it. The rest of the boys had gone out by that time, and the room was empty except for us three. I was wishing it was empty of me, too. Stocky hadn't said a word to me nor given a sign of remembering I was there. Bub-Bub-Billy slung his new copy down and turned away toward the door without a word; but Stocky called after him:

"Strong, wait a minute." He swung around to me. "What dud-did you say your nun-name was?"

"Burke," I told him.

"You dud-don't know anything

about nun-newspaper work, dud-do you?"

"No, sir; but——"

"'Bub-but!'" he cut in, with a short, dry laugh. "You've got the 'bub-but' habit, too, have you? Strong, tut-take this boy with you on your run today. Let him help you on the routine. You tut-two can 'bub-but' it out together for a couple of days tut-tut-till I see what else I can dud-do with him." And with that he put his nose down to his stack of copy again and got busy, leaving me to trail out to the street in Bub-Bub-Billy's wake.

The particulars don't matter; but it wasn't much of a morning, that first one. Bub-Bub-Billy went poking down toward railroad headquarters, all shrunk up inside his overcoat, with his thick jaw set hard and not a word out of him to let me know he knew I was along—cross as an old turtle with an ulcerated tooth. Once or twice I started to speak a pleasant word, but it sort of died away inside of me. Dead silence till we got down to the C. & P. building. Then some more dead silence from me, while I tagged Bub-Bub-Billy up and down through long, dark halls and in and out through swinging-doors and back and forth through crowded rooms, with bunches of men fussing over messes of papers, I keeping close at his heels and standing around trying not to look as if I was feeling anything when he stopped to talk with some dub or other, digging up his day's stuff. I've forgiven him, plenty, a long while ago; but he didn't treat me white, Bub-Bub-Billy didn't, that morning. My first taste of the noble profession of journalism had a flavor of something in it that didn't seem to belong there.

It was near noon before he spoke to me. Then he showed me a big sheet of paper with some close columns of typewritten figures. "Copy those," he said, "and come up to the office when you've got 'em."

I tracked in, after a bit, and laid the stuff on Bub-Bub-Billy's desk. He was hard at it on his typewriter, and so were the rest of them, ten or a dozen; clickety-clickety-click-click. I knew

what they were doing; they were Making the Paper. And I wasn't in it. I waited a minute, and then I pushed my figures up closer to Bub-Bub-Billy's elbow.

"Mmm!" he said.

"Is there anything else I can do, Mr. Strong?" I asked him.

"Mmm!"

"I'd like to help you, if there is anything."

"Mmm!" Now doesn't that sound just like him? "*Mmm!*"

Well, that was the way of it for four nasty days. Four days. Nothing doing for Tut-Tut-Tommy but shrinking back out of the way and chewing his teeth and getting madder and madder. You wouldn't have thought that Stocky knew I was on earth; and neither did anybody else, much.

But of course that couldn't last forever and ever. Nothing does. The fifth day about two o'clock I drilled out to a lunch-counter and climbed up on a stool after a chunk of pie and some coffee, and beside me was a fellow I knew. He'd heard, somewhere, about my job, and he leaned over and whispered my first story. Do you notice how I said that, "leaned over and whispered"? That's the kind of a story it was—one of the kind that nobody will listen to in a loud tone of voice. You see them in print sometimes; but you hide the paper from the children. You'll have to think about my state of mind; I was starved to death for a Story, and here it came, crawling right at me. It was about the doings of a man named Stephen Morton—a great big man that everybody in town knew. I didn't know him, but I knew his name. Stephen Morton—remember that.

I hustled back to the office and got down at my typewriter and began to pick the thing out, a letter at a time, I being raw at the machine. I made two or three bad starts before I got it to going; and just when I was getting a real good smear on it old Stocky came ambling down the desk-line and pulled up behind me, standing there and looking down at me.

"What you dud-doing, youngster?" he asked.

"I've got a good story," I told him.

"Is it for tut-today's pup-paper?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh!" There was a slow, lazy drawl in his voice. "Oh! I dud-didn't know. I thought mum-maybe you were trying to gug-get it ready for yesterday's." He waited a minute, as if he were letting that soak into me. "Listen," he said; "dud-do you hear that nun-noise?"

Did I hear it? It was shaking the building; a deep, hollow, trembling rumble of sound, with a steady beat in it like a big, overworked heart.

"Dud-do you know what that is?" Stocky asked. "It mum-means the *Journal's* gone to pup-press. Whenever you hear that noise it's Tut-too Late." He picked up the three or four sheets I'd written. "You'll learn," he said. "Mum-maybe your story'll dud-do for tut-tomorrow."

He held it up against his nose and began to read it, with me screwing around in my chair to watch his face and see how it struck him. It seemed to strike him hard, right up under his ear; his face was the color of old tallow, and his lips were moving. I could see the copy shake in his hand, and he was hissing his breath in and out between his big teeth. It looked as if I had rung thirteen.

When he'd read it through he laid the stuff on my desk and turned away without a word; but after a couple of limps he came back and grabbed it up again, ripping the sheets in two through the middle and tearing the halves into tiny tatters, throwing them upon the floor and grinding them under his big foot.

"You needn't fuf-finish that story," he roared at me. "Roared" is the word. Yes, "roared." There was something in the tone of it that made me feel as if I had done wrong. But the old boy didn't stop to explain. He just chucked his hat on and bolted out.

"Take my dud-desk, Strong," he called back over his shoulder. "I'll be gug-gone for an hour or so."

Well, then I was sore. That's the most catching disease there is; let it strike one man in a gang that's shut up in one room working at one job, and it gets them all, sure. I had the whole string of symptoms, sitting there brooding over my feelings and cuddling my hurt pride and all that, till one of the fellows loafed along and spoke to me. Buckman, his name was—a pasty-faced little scut, with a wrong look in his eyes. I hadn't liked him from the first minute; but I warmed up to him then, because he'd taken notice of me. You know how grateful you feel for a little notice from almost anybody, sometimes.

"Come on, Burkey," Buckman said; "let's go get somethin' to eat." I guess it was that "Burkey" that caught me; it sounded so nice and intimate, coming from an old, wise boy like him. So I got my coat and we went down together to a Dutch joint around the corner, where the fellows liked to go when they wanted real eating. The room was partitioned off in little wooden boxes, just big enough to hold three or four, with a plain wooden table and a couple of wooden benches where you sat and ate fat cheese and pretzels and souse and spranglefrutzelz and such things.

We got a mess of salt beef and soggy potatoes and grease-soaked cabbage and thick, black coffee. Sounds rich, doesn't it? After we'd eaten a while, that intimate feeling came on me again, strong.

"Say, that Stockton's a good deal of an Aleck, isn't he?" I said.

Buckman gave a snort. "He's a real—" It was a real wise name he called him. "That old blister wouldn't hold his job till tonight, if it wasn't for one thing: He knows too much. See? You know who Purdue is—the fellow that owns the biggest part of the paper. He's a hot old sport, that Purdue is, though he's awful sly about it, keeping it hid from his wife and girls, so there's only a few of us knows it. Stockton's next, all right; they say he puts his men to picking up all they can find out about

Purdue's pretty little ways and bringing the stuff to him—those that are willing to crawl to him, I mean. And Purdue knows that Stockton's hip to him. See? If he let Stockton out, there'd be hell to pay. Oh, he's onto his alphabet, that fellow."

I was leaning over the table, taking it all in, with my fool mouth hanging open. It seemed like victuals and drink to me, after the way Stocky had ripped up my stuff. But it didn't last long; because there was old Stocky himself, looming big around the partition back of Buckman, with his big face twisted out of shape and his eyes blazing and his big hand catching Buckman by the scruff of his collar and jerking him up into the air so his feet dangled off the floor.

I looked for a killing; but there wasn't anybody hit; there wasn't so much as a word said. All Stocky did was to hold that brat out in front of him for a minute, with his eyes burning through and through him. Then, somehow—I can't tell you how it was—that look seemed to die away to nothing and he took his hands off Buckman and let him go. That was all there was to it—just that and no more.

I got up and was going to sneak out, too; but Stocky laid his hand on my arm and pushed me back onto my bench.

"Wait, son," he said in a voice as soft and sad as a sick child's. "Stay here. I want to tut-talk to you."

But it took him a good while to begin. He seemed to have forgotten all about me, sitting there with his elbows on the table and his face hidden in his hands. But pretty soon he straightened up with a slow, tired movement.

"How old are you, Bub-Burke?" he asked.

"Twenty-one," I told him.

"Yes. And dud-do you want to stay in this bub-business?"

"Yes, sir."

"Dud-do you want to stay in it *right*, son?"

"Yes, sir." I did, too, on the square from that very minute. He needn't have said another word to me: I could read it all in his poor, squinting, old eyes.

"Well, you can stay on the *Journal*, if you want to. I'll fuf-fix it. There are some things you'll have to learn, of kuk-course. I'll help you all I kuk-can. Bub-but there are other things nobody can tut-teach you. Being a clean, fair-minded man is one of 'em. That's the sort of a pup-paper we're trying to make—clean and fuf-fair-minded; and that's the sort of mum-men it takes to mum make it. The other sort get in, once in a while; but they dud-don't stay." He pulled up a bit then, as if he didn't want to say the rest; but it came out. "That Mum-Morton story. I dud-don't know where you gug-got it, and I don't kuk-care. It's a tut-true story; I dud-do know that. But don't pup-pass up any more like it to my dud-desk. Don't write 'em; dud-don't listen to 'em. They would soil the pup-paper, and they'll soil you." A funny notion seemed to strike him then, for his face wrinkled up in a comical grin. "I heard what you kuk-called me: 'Aleck,' wasn't it? Oh, you needn't kuk-care, now. I reckon it's tut-true enough. It kuk-keeps me too busy handling the Alecks on my staff to leave me much tut-time for kuk-curing my own faults. You'll understand how that is after a while." He reached across the table and took hold of my hand, like a father with a kid he's fond of. "It's a fuf-fine game, Bub-Burke. You're gug-going to like it."

### III

OF course Buckman didn't show up at our place again after that. No, sir, we didn't see hide nor hair of him; he just skipped the town, and Stocky gave me his run at the City Hall. A queer turn-up, wasn't it? Accident? Or was it predestination? There are plenty of folks who'll tell you a man's a fool for believing either way. You can search me; I don't know which it was. But if Buckman hadn't called me "Burkey" that day, and if we hadn't gone to that Dutch joint instead of some other of the half-million places scattered over town, and if

it hadn't been— Oh, what's the use? It looks like mooching to run in a lot of "ifs" at space-rates; and besides, they don't prove anything. After I had put in all I could think of you could still say it was either accident or predestination, whichever you wanted to, just according to the way your mind's built. But if I hadn't got the City Hall run, most likely I'd never have had to mix it up with that Stephen Morton man again; and if *that* hadn't happened, then there wouldn't be any story for me to tell at all. It looks as if I'm kind of bound to take the predestination side if the thing ever comes up in debating society.

I got along first-rate on my run, right from the first. It was lucky for me—or else it was a part of the same predestination deal—that there wasn't much doing right then, when I was getting broken in; nothing but blowing around and learning to call the fellows by their first names, and giving smokes to the janitors and elevator-boys, and copping out the nicest girls to talk to, and sort of getting next to where the good stories would most likely be if there were any, and all that, and finding out who was friends with who, and who wasn't, among the political gang, and why so, and why not—just getting ready, you know.

I'd always had a heap of respect for statesmen in the history books. When I was a young kid soldiers were my people—the good, human, sweating, swearing sort that you'll see in the pictures running up steep, smoky hills, waving bloody sabers and making those nice, short, snappy dying speeches. That was going to be my stunt when I grew up; I had my dying speech all fixed up and used to practice it when I'd be chopping kindling or choring around the barn. I forget what it was; I forgot it as soon as I'd worked over to the back part of the book, where it tells about the statesmen—the solemn-faced, wise-eyed lads in the Prince Alberts. After I'd gone against Daniel Webster and Patrick Henry and that outfit for a month or

so it made the soldier business look like running a garbage cart. No, sir; it was Eloquence for me after that. I was going to have a tongue that would kindle the kitchen fire and melt the ice off the front sidewalks. I loved soldiers, all right; but I respected the statesmen.

I had it figured out that I was going to find some statesmen around the City Hall. Of course they wouldn't be past-masters, but they'd belong to the breed; the sort that keep themselves lean and threadbare for the Public Good. You get the idea.

Vanity, vanity! It took me just about two days to come out of that trance. If there was even the rawest kind of an amateur statesman in that City Hall bunch, I couldn't get him spotted—and I haven't yet. I remember the first time I went against His Honor the Mayor; Timmy Collins; the Honorable Timothy Collins; "Smooth Tim"—whichever way you want to put it. He was shut up in his private room with a couple of stiff, and I had to wait my turn. Then I went in with my hat in my hand and my young heart knocking; and there was Timmy with his feet up on his desk, and his fat, purple cheeks bellying down over his collar, and his mean, greasy little eyes blinking up at me from the bottom of their deep wells of fat.

"Well, phwat is ut?" he gurgled out of the bottom of his fat throat.

"I'm the representative of the *Journal*," I told him.

"Th' divvle y' are! Phwy, ye're nawthin' but a babe! Phwat d'ye want wit me?"

When he nailed me down like that I didn't seem to know just what I did want nor why I'd come. I forget what I started to talk about, exactly; but it was something about the Problems of Municipal Government, or the True Standard of Civic Righteousness—some kind of a warmed-up left-over from my High School political economy. Whatever it was, Timmy didn't seem to know what I was trying to say; he just sat there, silent.



"Say, phwat's eatin' ye?" he growled at me. "Phwat are ye tryin't'do?—stringin' me? Quit ut, kiddy. 'Civic Righteousness' is ut? T' th' divvle wit ye!"

That was His Honor the Mayor. And there was the City Council. Statesmen? Oh, yes, yes! I tell you it was a shock, the first night of council meeting when I took my chair at the press table under the president's desk and let my eyes drift along that line of statesmen's faces. Barlow, the *Times* man, was sitting next to me with a half-burned cigar in the corner of his mouth and his face puckered down in a disgusted scowl.

"Gad!" he whispered to me. "Ain't that a nice layout of crooks and grafters to be trusted with the government of a city? Look at 'em! It makes me sick, every time I have to come up and sit here and see 'em and hear 'em. Most of 'em are mangy foxes, and the rest are yellow pups. And they're governing *us*! Oh, I wish to the Lord I owned a newspaper in this town!"

He had me listening. "Why?" I asked. "What would you do?"

He waited a minute before he answered me, with a neat, ripping little oath under his breath.

"Do? Why, I'd begin serving time in the pen for libel about next Monday. That's the beauty of it. Nobody dares to print a word of the truth, so long as both circuit court judges belong to the same gang with this outfit and were given their jobs just to make it perfectly safe for these thieves to steal the city treasury dry. Both those scoundrels over at the court-house get a rake-off on the stealing for protecting it. And what can anybody do to stop it? Not a damned thing! Why, I'm helping to protect it, myself. The *Times* gets the city advertising, don't it? Can I write what I know and get a word of it past the desk? Not on your life! I've quit trying. There, listen to that, will you!"

The Hon. Frank Hoover, Councilman from the Fifth Ward, was on his feet and talking.

"Mr. President, I want fur to ask fur to have that res'lution referred to my c'mittee so as fur to have it considered before it's acted on. It hadn't ought fur to be passed now, without considering it."

Back of the rail, where the visitors sat, a man got up and pushed through the gate, hurrying up to Hoover and whispering over his shoulder, and then passing on and whispering to some of the others, bending down and patting them on the back.

"Mr. President," Hoover said, "I want fur to withdraw my motion, and I want fur to move instead that the resolution be passed."

Six out of the nine voted for it. Barlow reached over and got the paper from the clerk.

"Metropolitan Street Sign Co.," he read. "Oh, he's in that, too, is he?"

"Who is that chap?" I asked.

"Which? That big butter-in? Don't you know him? That's Steve Morton."

Oh, that was Steve Morton, was it? I took a better look at him, with a queer feeling about half-way between a liking and a grudge—you know. He was a good-looker, I'm bound to say that; tall and straight and square-shouldered, with a pair of dark, bold eyes and a trick of keeping his wide lips parted in a steady smile that showed his strong, even, white teeth. It was a horribly deceiving trick; by-and-bye I found out that it meant a lot besides good feeling; before I got through with him I came to dread it as a scared rat dreads the grin of a rattle-snake that's got him backed up in a corner. But it was a nice smile to look at, just then, when nothing was going wrong—friendly and comfortable and confident and prosperous and all that, just fit to go along with his fine shape and his expensive clothes and the rich little dazzler in his white shirt-front. Yes, I've got to own up that I liked his looks.

After a bit, when there was a few minutes' recess in the proceedings, Morton came strolling up to the press table, smiling his benevolent smile and

giving friendly nods to the boys. His eye lit on me, and I felt him giving me a quick, sharp looking-over. There wasn't a flicker of change in his face; but somehow I knew that he wanted to know all about me.

"Hello!" he said, straight at me, with a friendly, deep purr in his voice. "A new man? For the *Journal*? Why, what's become of Buckman?"

"Buckman's quit—left town," I told him.

"Oh!" I couldn't help feeling that there was a shade of fret in the word, but he didn't make any more show of it. He sat down on my end of the table, holding out his strong, white hand. "Well! Here's luck! We'll see more or less of one another. My name's Morton."

"Mine's Burke," I said.

"Burke?" He was holding my hand in his, pressing it. "Burke? I know a Daniel Burke here. Are you kin to him?"

"Daniel Burke is my father."

"Oh!" That was a favorite word of his, and he could make it mean a lot of things. This time it meant pleased surprise. "Why, then you and I aren't strangers. I've known your father for years. He's a good man—a fine man—a gentleman."

The little recess was over, and the president was rapping for order. Morton fetched some thick, gold-banded cigars from his pocket and rolled them across the table to us, giving me a special particular nod and smile with mine. "Glad to know you," he said. "We'll meet again, of course—often, I hope." And with that he went loitering easily away and out of the chamber, as if he were through for the evening.

Barlow cracked another hard, sharp cuss-word between his teeth; then he crumpled Morton's cigar up between his fingers and threw the rags of it under the table.

I laughed at him. "What's the matter with you?" I said. "What did you do that for?"

"Damned thief!" he growled. "He can gag my paper, but he can't prevent my being any kind of a private idiot I please."

"Yes, but what's he *done*?"

"Done! Don't he own this gang, body and soul? Hasn't he bought 'em and paid for 'em? And ain't he one of the biggest stockholders in that court-house judicial corporation across the street, that's ready to grind out ready-made decisions for him at so much per? Don't he and his pals steal a cool quarter of a million out of the strong-box every damned year? What's he *done*! Kid, you make me ill."

That sounded right interesting to me. I kept thinking about it, in between whiles, when I didn't have to pay attention to what was going on; and after a while I asked Barlow:

"Say, look here: What's the matter with the *Journal* printing that stuff, if I can get it? They're not playing party politics. Don't you suppose they would?"

"Huh! with old Stockton running the city end? You don't know much, do you, for a fact? You just try it!"

An ugly little flash of remembrance shot through me about the way the old boy had treated my first Morton story. "Stockton?" I said. "How's that?"

"You just try it once. That's all—you just try it and see." And that was all he'd say to me.

But I kept thinking about it, off and on, for a day or two, turning it this way and that; and then one afternoon, after we'd gone to press, I went up and tackled Stocky.

"Mr. Stockton," I said, "do you know about the crooked work that's going on up at the City Hall?"

The old fellow was lying back in his chair, resting, stretching his bad leg over the edge of his desk to ease the pain, and sucking away on his old black pipe. He cocked his eye up at me with that comical dry grin of his.

"Kuk-crooked work? Is anybody kuk-crooked up there? You dud—don't say!"

"And the papers are keeping still about it," I told him. "I want to ask you if you'll print the truth, if I'll write it."

The notion seemed to tickle him

some. "The tut-truth!" he chuckled around his pipe-stem. "Gug-going to write some tut-tut-truth, are you? Don't gug-get reckless, son." Then I guess he saw he was wounding my sensitive young feelings. He didn't quit his chuckling, but he talked straight. "Well, we're running a nun-newspaper. Gug-go ahead. You won't be the fuf-first one that's fuf-failed to get it."

"I didn't know how you'd feel about it," I blurted. "That man Morton's mixed up in it."

His grin died a sudden death—perished right before my eyes, and the stiff and cold remains of it were stretched out around his wide mouth. "Mum-Morton!" he said. It was like a gasp. His pipe fell from his hand and rolled down to the floor; but he didn't seem to notice it—nor me either. He was staring straight at me, but looking clean through and beyond me, sitting as if he were frozen. I began to feel a little chilly myself, after a long minute or two. But by-and-bye he drew a quick, deep breath and his eyes came back to life again.

"Gug-go ahead," he said. "Gug-get your story."

#### IV

HERE'S where we get to Miss Frances Tracy. You'll notice I haven't said a word about her yet, though the Lord knows I've wanted to. If this were my story, with Me as Chief It, she would have come into it before I'd written a stickful. But it isn't my story; it's Stocky's; so little Frances has had to wait back in the wings till her turn came.

Frances worked in the mayor's office—stenographer to Timmy's chief clerk. No other mayor in this town ever had a chief clerk; but it was a case of must with Timmy, because he couldn't write writing himself—couldn't even put down "T. Collins" and get it right without somebody standing over his shoulder and helping him push the pen. Besides, he had to have somebody in the main room outside to lie to folks

when he'd be stretched out on his leather sofa, too drunk to see visitors. That's what Eddie Molloy was for—a funny, red-headed, grinning little mut, with a sly voice and no eye winkers and a way of slipping around on his feet without making any noise to let you know he was coming. I think Eddy expected to shine in politics himself some time, by-and-bye; one of the signs was that he didn't like to work a little bit. I say God bless him for that; because *that's* why Frances was there.

I got to know that she was a good old friend of mine the minute I first laid eyes on her. Tell you about her? Honest, I can't. She's nobody's comic valentine, like the rest of these people. She's an Art Calendar. Do you get the point of that hint? *She's named the day*—that's what I want you to infer. But that's on the side; it didn't happen till this story was all over. I'm just telling you so you'll know.

Well, anyway, it was when I got sight of Frances that the newspaper business opened up to me what they call the Third Dimension. It had been just flat before; but I knew right away that there was going to be a thickness between her and me. Yes, I know that's a pretty bum joke; but I'm not saying it for a joke. She won't admit it—she claimed it didn't happen till ages and ages afterward; but I've got my mind made up that she took a notion to me, too, long before we'd known each other. And I'm going to keep on thinking so. She didn't seem worried by having me around; and I seemed to get it in my head somehow that the mayor's office was a pretty good place to look for news, because I began to hang around there right steady.

Most of the news I got from Frances I didn't write for the paper, though. I used to interview her about herself. She hadn't any folks except her mother. Her mother was real old—she is yet, for that matter—and Frances was earning a living for both of them. She'd been at that job since before

Timmy was mayor, and he had kept her because he had just sense enough to see that he couldn't keep the shop open without her. He treated her white, too; and that's just about the only thing that I can think of to say in his favor. The rest of him was nothing but a bad cross between billy-goat and ape.

Here: you can judge for yourself whether the girl's memory isn't a trifle bad about liking me. The second Monday night after I was put on the City Hall run I took her to the theatre with me on a pass that read, "Admit Mr. Thomas Burke & Lady, Acct. *Daily Journal*." I didn't have to coax much, either.

That was the night when I got my second look at Steve Morton. He didn't get to the show till the curtain was going up for the second act. Then I saw him come into a box over on our side, a little way in front of us, dressed to kill—and handsome. Yes, sir, he was certainly as smart a looker as I'd ever seen outside the picture books. When I get to where I can wear some real clothes I'm going to try and remember him as he stood there that night, shucking his Inverness and then turning around to help the woman.

She was a beautiful woman—beautiful! I noticed that almost before I'd looked at her. The next thing I noticed was that she seemed expensive. I know mighty well that all I've got saved up to commence house-keeping wouldn't buy one side of the coat she had on. It wasn't a coat; it was a wrap—pale blue outside, and the inside made out of this white fluff, with every soft hair of it reaching out to tell you: "I cost a pile of money!" But that wasn't a patchen to what was down under the wrap. I can't begin to tell you how it was. You go ask some high-up dressmaker, and then multiply it by about six, and you'll have just about half of what this woman was. The man that broke the bank at Monte Carlo couldn't have afforded anything any better.

Frances was watching the play, quiet and interested; but I guess she

must have heard me catch my breath, because she turned around to me, and her eyes followed the way mine were looking. "Murder!" I whispered to her. "There's His Nobs! Who's that he's got with him?"

"That?" she said. "Why, that's Mrs. Morton, of course."

I'd have found it out for myself, most likely, if I'd waited a minute. Some wives are like that; she was, anyway. You'll have to try to help me make you understand. When she'd got herself fixed and had sat down in the chair over against the dashboard, it was just as if somebody had waved a wand over her. Marble—that was the way she looked—cold, hard, white, stiff marble. I couldn't make out what she'd come for. She had her beautiful face turned toward the stage; but you could tell she wasn't seeing anything, because all through the duel scene and the love-making and the buck-and-wing dancing she had just that same expression on her—no expression at all, but Absolute Zero. The only move she made was with her little white hand that lay on the edge of the box, her slim fingers with the jewels on them picking at the plush—picking, picking, picking. And it wasn't any better with him, though you couldn't see him so plain. He was sitting in the back part of the box, in the shadow, with that steady mask of a smile on his face, but never changing a hair—just staring. Deaf and dumb and paralyzed; that's the way he seemed to size up.

"Oho!" I said to myself. "How happy they are! How horribly fond of each other! Tommy, there's something up."

Well, after the second act he got up and loafed out of the box, neither of them giving the first sign of knowing that the other one was anywhere near. Pay-day wasn't until Wednesday; but I had a couple left in my pocket, and when I saw him drifting down the side aisle the notion struck me to go out and get Frances some candy. I got it, too, and then I waited a couple of minutes, hanging

around in the lobby, keeping my keen eye on the lookout for Morton. I don't know what I was expecting; I guess I must have had a hunch.

I got sight of him pretty soon, standing over at one side, and I saw he was making motions with his face to somebody. It was a woman: Lizzie Taylor. I didn't know who she was, then; I never did know till I saw her in police court, that time when her gambling-joint was raided, a year or so afterward, after we had broken up the whole ring and she had lost her pull. She was back in the lobby, too, alone, watching Morton. I saw her nod her head to him, to show him she understood; and then she waited where she was until the house-lights were ducked out for the next act. It was plumb dark back there, so it was no trick at all for me to sneak up into the shadow of the curtain that hung around the spot-light machine, close enough to her, so I could have touched her if I'd stretched out my hand.

Morton hurried over to her, laying his hand on her arm as if they were pals.

"Hello, old girl!" he whispered. "How's it going?"

"Fine!" she told him, in her thick, straw-blond voice. "They were both up last night. Timmy was half-full to begin with, and Pete said he came along like a lamb. The old fool!"

"Did he play?" Morton asked.

"Did he? Trust me for that! He had to be primed with another pint before we could get him started; but then we ran him against the faro lay-out, and he stayed with it till after three. He was so clean I had to pay for his hack."

Morton gave a long, still chuckle, as if he was tickled to death. "Good! good!" he said. "Liz, you're a wonder! How much did he drop?"

"Twelve hundred."

"Bully! And Pete's keeping with him, all right. I saw them today, over at the Tuxedo. The old boy was the soggiest I ever saw him. You'd better tell Pete about not letting him get too drunk to draw a cheque. Twelve hun-

dred! Why, at that rate he won't last more than a week."

"I guess not." Oh, I'll fix him. The house'll declare a dividend this month all right, all right."

Morton was laughing, as if it were a great big joke.

"Liz, he hasn't got a thing in the world but the ready money in those two banks. Talk about luck! He'll be on his uppers by the time I need him. You know how bad I've got to have him—and I'm going to get him." He broke into his deep, quiet laugh again. "It does seem rank, though, don't it?—buying him with his own money that we've taken away from him. Oh, it's rich!"

Nobody could see them, where they were standing—nobody but me. I saw him slip his arm around her waist for a second; and then his fingers began to play with one of her thick, bleached curls over her white ear.

"I'll show you how much I appreciate this, girl. Nobody but you could have figured it out for me as you've done. When the game is played, you won't be sorry for it; I'll promise you that. Fix him, Liz. Now, I've got to go back to my box. I've got my wife here; but I'll send her home after the show and see you down yonder."

He went up the aisle and dropped into his chair, and Lizzie drifted out to the street. I waited where I was till they were out of the way, and then I went back to Frances with the box of candy. I was all in a cold sweat. Think of it: *Me*—Tut-Tut-Tommy—let right in on the ground floor of a deal like that! There was no more play for me after that; I had the little old Sleuth up on the stage looking like a smooth nickel that you have to work off on the blind woman that plays the concertina in front of the post-office.

By the time I'd taken Frances out home and told her good-bye, it was after midnight; but I didn't want to go to bed. Not me. What I seemed to want was a cup of coffee and some deep thought. So I piked down to one of those all-night places and got my black drink; and while I was putting



it in, who floats along but Barlow, the *Times* man.

He saw me and came over to my table, tired and bad-tempered. He'd been to the play, too; but he'd had to write it up afterward, instead of going home with a nice girl, and he'd just come from his typewriter.

"Wasn't it rotten?" he grumbled at me. "But there's one good thing: I gave it such a roast that they won't let me inside the theatre again this Winter; so I won't have any more of it to do. There are several ways of killing a cat besides feeding it to death."

I didn't want to hear anything about that.

"Barlow, look here," I said to him. "I'm green up on our run. You know that well enough. I want you to tell me something: How does Morton stand with the mayor?"

"Stand!" Barlow blurted. "He don't stand at all. He fell down a long time ago—last Winter, when he tried to get Timmy to approve his gas-franchise steal. It's been war between them all year. Morton didn't own enough councilmen to get the thing through over Timmy's veto—he don't yet; the old gas company's too strong for him. I don't know what was the matter with Timmy. It's mighty queer; but that old brute seems somehow to object to being bought. Nobody can understand how a mind like his works. It's been tried often enough. He don't stop at anything for a friend or for those who stood by him in politics; but he can hold a grudge better than any man I know—fierce! The trouble with Morton is that he fought Timmy in his campaign—tried to get the place for his own man; and money don't seem able to hire Timmy to forget it."

"Mmm!" I said. That's an awfully good word to use when you don't want to say anything, but just want to coax the other man to keep on with the talk. Try it once. "Mmm!" I said.

"But Morton's game," Barlow went ahead. "He's no quitter. He'll try it again; you see if he don't. It's about due now—he bobs up with some

big deal just about every so often. Say, are you going to do something with it?"

"Me?" I said. My young mind was pretty near bursting with yearning to open up and tell him all about it; but I pulled hard on the puckering-strings. "Why, what can I do with it?" I asked.

He gave a queer, disagreeable laugh—the laugh of a man who's so worn out that he's quit having any respect for his job.

"You can't do anything with it," he said. "That's what I was going to warn you about. Don't try it. You'll simply queer yourself. Let me tell you this: If you want to make a success out of this business, don't try to whittle across the grain. See? All you'll make out of that is a muss of chips, when you might just as well be making some nice, long, curly shavings by whittling longwise. Do you get me? Find out what the game is and fit into it. I wish to the Lord I'd had somebody to tell me when I was a youngster. It's a cinch that I wouldn't be where I am now—forty years old and dubbing along worrying myself to death on twenty dollars a week—too old and disgruntled to take a fresh start. You know what the *Times* theory is: 'Find out what the people want and give them just exactly that.' Damn me if I don't think there's a lot of good sense in it."

I know Barlow better now than I did then, and I know he didn't really mean a word of it; but he tried to act as if he did. He poured the last of his coffee into him and pushed back his chair, buttoning the collar of his cheap overcoat around his neck and glowering across the table at me. "I'm giving you a friendly tip, Burke," he said. "If you don't want to be where I am at my age, you mind what I tell you."

And with that he drifted out and left me alone with my young thoughts.

## V

It was pretty early when I got around to the mayor's office in the

morning. There wasn't anybody stirring in the building excepting the janitors; but I thought I knew what I knew, and I found out I was right.

The door of Timmy's office was unlocked and Miss Frances Tracy was sitting at her desk, opening the mail or something. She was the only one on that dump that attended to the real work. It ought to have been "Mayor Tracy." Timmy never showed up till ten o'clock, and that Molloy boy came around whenever he got good and ready. Somebody had to look after things.

When I went in I got a bright smile. Frances had enjoyed the play, God bless her! and she hadn't tried to hide it from me a little bit. Why, she actually seemed grateful, as if she was the one that had received the favor. And along with the smile she gave me the littlest, whitest, dearest hand that ever was, and she let me hold it for just the littlest bit of a minute; just barely long enough to let my heart give one swift, joyful skip before she took it away again. But it was long enough to give me a bad fit of what they call Discomposure, if you know what that is. I had to stop and think before I could think of what was on my mind.

"His honor isn't here yet, is he?" I asked, after a while.

There was a shine in her eyes and a soft silver tinkle in her laugh as she shook her head for answer. She seemed to take my question for a joke.

"Nor he wasn't here yesterday," I said, "nor the day before that, either. And he won't be here today. Look here: Do you know what's up with him?"

There was a quick change came over her then; a sort of an icy change, as when the wind shifts out of the South on a warm January day and starts in to blow from the Northwest, putting a thin blur of mist over the clear sky. But she wasn't disagreeable about it.

"Mr. Burke," she said, ever so gently, "you mustn't come to me and ask me to talk about Mayor Collins. I can't do it. Don't you see that I can't?"

No, I hadn't seen that she couldn't. But I saw it then, right off, good and plenty. That's one of Frances's funny ways; she can drop just a single word in that mild, soft, sweet voice of hers, and make it go farther than one of these birthday year-books chock full of precepts—one short, plain little word will show you that you're dead wrong and make you want to do better. The way she says "Tommy!" to me, once in a while, when I need it, is as good as six months in jail.

That morning was my first lesson, and it didn't take me longer than two jerks to show me that I'd have to work my story out in some other way than by presuming on our theatre-ticket friendship to betray her into betraying Timmy. Let's be frank about this; I may as well tell you that I'd gone there with just that notion in my head. Maybe I could tone down the expression a trifle, but that's what it would amount to, anyway. However, I gave it up, instant.

"No, I'm not going to ask it," I said; "but, girl, there's a big story in this office, and I'm going to get it. You've been fair with me, and I'm going to talk square with you. I don't know yet what the story is; but it's some kind of a blazer. If I can get it—and I'm going to try hard—it'll most likely dig the dirt right out from under old Timmy's feet. It'll be a bad mess, from the looks of things. I hope it won't make any difference to you, to hurt you; but if it does I can't help it. I've got to land that story. I'm just telling you so you'll know."

"Yes," she said, with just the same quiet gentleness; "yes, I know."

She sat for a minute, looking down into her lap, her face sobered and saddened; then she gave a long, stifled sigh. She didn't say another word; but I knew well enough what she was thinking in her heart.

With me there wasn't any sadness. I didn't care how rotten the deal was, if I could only have the glory of digging it up and exposing it—the rottenner the better. The newspaper business wouldn't mean much to some folks if

everything and everybody were just straight and clean and honest—on the same principle, I reckon, that the Women's Societies for the Promotion of Christian Love and Charity would peter out and quit business if it wasn't for the moist stories that have to be whispered in quiet corners, to keep up the interest. We're a queer lot. If this little old world should get to be all reformed, your sanctified Reformer would be the first one to perish with sick disgust.

Well, that's all on the side. What I started to tell you was that Frances was sad. She wasn't thinking about maybe having to lose her job; she was just sad from thinking that such things had to exist in the midst of this sweet, pure, lovely life. Seeing her that way, with her dear face drooping and troubled, made it lie heavy on my mind for a second or two. I got a wild impulse to tell her all about it, and tell her to tell Timmy, and let him save his bacon before it was all scorched to a black crisp; but I didn't. After a few minutes she looked up at me, with a faint smile about her lips and her deep eyes full of feeling.

"We're going to keep on being friends, aren't we?" I asked.

"Surely!" she said. "But to be good friends, we have to respect one another, don't we?"

What she meant was plain enough. "Respect!" I said. "Yes, that's all right: 'Respect!'" And I reckon she had a pretty plain notion of what I meant, too, because a ripple of peach-bloom color crept over her face as she bent back her work. I couldn't say any more than that then; I just shut up my mouth and went out.

It was funny; but down in the main corridor I ran right against Steve Morton, coming in from the street, big and smiling and respectable-looking. He put out his hand to me, with his other hand fondling my shoulder.

"And how's my friend Burke this morning?" he asked, in his deep purr.

"Oh, pretty fair," I told him; and then, before I could think, I came near—darn near—to queering the whole

business. I don't know how or why I did it, unless it was because the Old Harry was in me. "And how's my friend Morton, and Tim, and Liz and Pete?" I asked.

I felt his muscles stiffen and tighten like steel wires. I was looking right into his face, and I saw the change there, too. He didn't take his smile off; it seemed to grow wider than ever; but his lips lifted up and away from his strong, white teeth, and away down deep in his eyes there kindled an ugly red flash of fire. He still had hold of me, as at first. He was six inches taller than I, and about twice as wide, and he pushed me by main strength back into the corner behind the revolving storm-door, blockading me in there with his body, looking down at me for a full minute, steady, as if he were boring me through and tearing out my mind's inwards.

"Eh?" he said, after a long wait. "Tell us what you mean, Burke."

A cold scare was frisking up and down my backbone, and creeping around my neck till it could take hold of my windpipe. It was the first time in my short, young life that I'd ever stood right up against Trouble, and I didn't like the looks of it, nor the smell of it, nor the feel of it, nor anything about it. I wished I hadn't done it. I guess Morton saw how I was fixed.

"Come, speak up," he said, getting a little closer to me and towering over me. "What did you mean by that? Answer my question, damn you!"

That last was what saved me. If it hadn't been for that, I'd most likely have died of heart failure, right there in my corner; but I seem to have conscientious scruples about being damned. It always kind of completes a circuit in me somewhere and starts an incandescent glow. It did then, and I wasn't afraid of him any more.

"Mean?" I said. "Oh, that was just a funny little riddle. You can have three guesses at the answer."

His smile was fixed fast; but his eyes were drawn close, till they showed nothing but narrow, hot slits. He didn't say anything more right away;

he was thinking. Then in a minute his eyes came open a bit.

"Ah-h!" he said, his voice cold and hard. "I remember. I saw you at the theatre, last night. So, that Tracy girl——"

"You're a liar!" I broke in, so raging mad that I didn't care how high he was nor how many big front teeth he had. "If you mean that Miss Tracy has given anything away, you're a liar."

I looked for some pretty radical conduct from him, in the face of that. But it didn't materialize. He knew how to hold himself in hand when he thought it best; oh, he was a master at that! Another quick change came over him; before I knew it his eyes were laughing at me and his hand was caressing my shoulder again.

"I beg your pardon, Burke," he said, and there was a plaintive sound in his voice as if he was sorry 'most to death for having offended Tut-Tut-Tommy. He was smooth, that Morton boy was. "I beg your pardon, Burke," he said, "but you rather caught me unawares."

He stood lounging in front of me, with his elbow on the window-ledge, and with the signs of his bad temper wiped clean off his face. He studied me for a little while, with a careful show of carelessness; and then he spoke in a manner that was all friendly and comfortable.

"You're an awfully clever chap, Burke. I can see there's no use trying to fool with you; and I *won't* try. I thought I was pretty cunning myself, but you've beaten me at it. On the square, now—man to man—if Miss Tracy didn't put you next—and I'll take your word for that—how did you find out about it?"

I had just sense enough left to let me see that he wasn't committing himself to anything, with enough left over to keep me from being seduced by his fake friendliness.

"Oh, that's all right," I said. "I'm not going around town in a trance."

He was doing some fast considering, trying to figure me out; it showed in his eyes, in spite of him. Pretty soon he seemed to think he had me sized up.

"I suppose you won't tell me how much you know," he said.

"Not yet," I answered; and with that he made his play.

"Look here," he purred; "whatever you may think you know, you don't understand the whole thing. You can't have all the facts, and you can't appreciate the situation without knowing them all. I suppose you're getting ready to print something, aren't you?"

Maybe you think I wasn't enjoying myself, with the great and only Steve Morton coming at me like that. I had all I could do not to flap my wings and crow. But I managed to choke it back.

"I don't expect to print anything but the facts," I told him. "If I turn in anything at all, the facts will be enough for me."

"Ah-h!" he said again. He appeared to have discovered some sort of comfort, for his face brightened up. "Well, now, see here, I'll be perfectly frank with you. There's no use in mincing matters. I don't want this little deal written up. I always treat you newspaper boys right, and I'm willing to do the square thing with you in return for your—ah—consideration—anything in reason, if you'll give it a name."

Pretty raw, wasn't it? But he had me added up as a raw proposition—a kid that had to be talked to in kindergarten English. But I gave him another mild shock.

"How much were you paying Buckman to keep still?" I shot at him. It was a wild inspiration, but it went straight home.

"Confound you, Burke!" he growled. "How do you get onto all these things? Never mind. I gave Buckman ten dollars a week. I'll do the same with you. Is it a go?"

There was no more danger of my flapping my wings. They hung straight down at my sides, paralyzed and limp. Wasn't it gorgeous? I pretended to be considering, while I was catching my breath and steadying my voice.

"Ten dollars a week," I said after him. "Well, now, I'll tell you; I hate

to have it that way. It looks too much like selling out my paper. Why can't we let it go till this thing's over? And then if you want to make me a little New Year's present—whatever you think it's worth to you—why, there's nothing to hinder, is there?"

A lie? Yes, I guess it was. I'm not trying to justify it or apologize for it, or anything. Most likely, if I'd had a little time, I could have thought of a better way; but carrying on the talk in a case like that, when you're face to face with a big, fat whale of a story, is a good deal like trap-shooting: You've got to let loose when the trap's sprung. Maybe it's hardly fair to expect a new hand like me not to do some bum work sometimes. Anyway, I lied to him, if that's what you want to call it, and it seemed to fool him and satisfy him, because he straightened up and drew a long breath.

"That's the way to talk!" he said. "I knew you'd be reasonable and fair. We'll let it stand that way, then; and I'll give you my word you won't have any regrets." He took a parting stroke at my shoulder. "Then it's understood, is it, that you won't write anything about it?"

After I'd fired the first lie the second barrel had to go, too. "Of course," I said, "if the story gets to the office, it'll be up to me to handle it. There's no telling how the thing may leak out. But if I do anything with it, of course this arrangement will be off. You'll see I can't promise anything more than that."

He seemed to feel perfectly sure of me, and we parted with that understanding.

## VI

WELL, the story did get to the office, too. I know it did, because I took it there myself—as much as I knew of it, and stretched it out for Stocky to take a squint at.

I wasn't much good on my run that day; I was too excited, and too light-headed, and too busy cuddling this

thing in my mind. When the last afternoon edition was off, and I was sitting at my desk, pondering, while Stocky was reading the other town papers and checking them over with ours, here came the office kid and laid down in front of me three or four clippings from the *Times* and the *World*—City Hall stories, with a blue-pencil ring scrawled on the face of them. That meant that I had been scooped, and it meant, too, that Stocky would expect me to walk up to the desk before I went home, and explain. Sometimes a man doesn't feel very cheerful about doing it, if the stories happen to be big and good. Two of these were. But I didn't seem to care much. I waited until the old boy had finished identifying the corpses in his morgue, and the room was empty; then I went over to him.

"Mr. Stockton," I said, "I lost out pretty bad today."

Things seem to have been going pretty right with him that day, because he gave me a gentle, fatherly grin.

"I nun-noticed," he said. "Oh, well, you've gug-got to gug-get used to it, some time, I reckon. You'll learn."

"I'm trying," I said. "It wasn't carelessness. I was working hard on that other story."

He seemed to have forgotten. "What story's that, Bub-Burke?"

"The one I was talking to you about the other day—you know: the Steve Morton business."

Again I saw that quick spasm of pain come across his face, with a hurt, hunted look in his poor old eyes. He was making a hard struggle to be calm—trying to light his pipe with a hand that could hardly hold the match, it shook so.

"Well?" he said after a bit. "Has anything tut-turned up?"

"I should say so!" I said; and I went ahead to tell him how the thing lay. I told him all of it, from first to last, not leaving out anything—not even the ugly little details that had happened that morning.



I had a feeling that I was telling it in lovely style, fit to convince him that I was a most magnificent young genius; I more than half expected to see him get out of his chair and make some sort of a demonstration of his admiration and respect for me. But not Stocky. From the time I began till I finished he sat back like a graven image, not stirring a muscle, and when I was through, still he kept that lifeless, nerveless look. It was a long minute before he stirred; and then it was only to droop forward on his desk, with his head going down on his crossed arms.

"What in Sam Hill?" I whispered to myself. "What's eating him?" I waited beside the desk till it got awkward; then I scuffled my feet on the floor to rouse him. No use; he sat like a dead man. "Mr. Stockton!" I said.

He gathered himself up, a little bit at a time, and looked at me, his eyes heavy with trouble.

"Mr. Stockton," I began, pretty lamely, "if there is any reason why you don't want me to do this story——"

He interrupted me with a gesture of his big hand, and his face flashed alive again, the red blood rushing into his cheeks and over his forehead, till his bald crown was dyed crimson.

"Nun-no!" he almost shouted. "You gug-go ahead. Dud-don't you pup-pay any attention to anything besides your story. Dud-do you hear?" A hot rage was on him; he sat glaring at me, his lips muttering, his strong hands lying locked together on the desk. By-and-bye he made a hard try for it and mastered himself. "Bub-Burke," he said, "there are gug-good and sufficient reasons why I wish to Gug-God that this thing wasn't tut-tut-true. Nun-never mind: You gug-get your story. I've told you bub-before that the *Journal* is strictly a nun-news-paper, and I'm running the city end of it. It'll tut-take you years and years of hard, steady, faithful work to be able to understand what a man will do for a pup-paper when he's grown up with it, pup-put the bub-bub-best of his life into it, felt it bub-becoming a part of himself, and knows that it's

bub-being run on the square. That's just exactly my kuk-case. I'm gug-getting pretty old, and pup-pup-past my best usefulness; but I'd gug-give what there is left, willingly, for the sake of serving the *Journal* in any way—any way—that's right and decent and for the public good. That's the way I'm tut-trying to tut-tut-train my bub-boys. It's a solemn dud-duty we owe to the pup-profession and the pup-people—a duty higher than any pup-private benefit or advantage. Can you remember that?"

I wonder if I can ever forget it. It wasn't only the words, though they were so white-hot with his passion that they seemed to burn themselves into my brain; it was the picture he made, sitting there in that dirty room, over his littered, dusty desk—a shabby, old cripple, with his youth clean vanished and gone, and nothing left for even a souvenir except the scars of the hard things he'd done in his young days. Please God, I won't forget! I couldn't appreciate it then; I'm just beginning to now. While it was happening, the thing that was uppermost in my mind was my story—not Stock's part of it, but mine. His part didn't really strike me till it was all over.

"Work it out the bub-best you can," Stocky said. "Gug-get it! If you want help, tell me."

That seemed to be about all, and I turned to go away; but he called me back.

"Another word, Bub-Burke," he said. "You understand your responsibility, of kuk-course. You'll be held accountable for what you tut-turn in. It must be tut-true, and nothing else. I'll stand for the tut-truth; but don't let your zeal gug-get away with you and bub-betray you into doing any man a wrong. That would bub-be as bub-bad as infamy itself. Nun-now I guess you can gug-go."

But he called me back still another time. This time it didn't seem to be the desk editor that was talking; it was just Stocky. And he was awfully shy about it, too—low-voiced and listless, as if he didn't half want to say it.

"Bub-Burke, I want you to dud-do me a personal favor," he said. "If you gug-get hold of anything else that's important in the dud-deal, I want you to come to me and tut-tell me—on the quiet, you know. And for Gug-God's sake, don't say anything to anybody about it tut-till you're sure. Pup-promise me that."

I couldn't see through it; but I promised. Then I got my coat and went home to my supper. I thought I'd done a pretty fair day's work.

But I wasn't through yet for the day. When I'd had my supper I loafed around the house for a while, trying to rest, but feeling restless and excited. My dad had gone out for the evening, and I was alone in the place, excepting for the dark lady who cooks for us.

I haven't told you yet that there's no family but dad and me. Most of the time we stay home for each other in the evenings, talking or reading or something; so when one happens to be gone the other's apt to be pretty lonesome. That's the way it was with me that night. I couldn't find a book that seemed to have any life in it; my thoughts kept going back and back to Steve Morton and Timmy Collins and Lizzie Taylor and my story. Then I felt a quick desire to blow out and take a look at Morton's home. I guess it was a hunch, maybe. I'd never seen his place, though I'd heard a lot about it. After a while I put on my things and went out to the far west part of town, where the rich quarter was, and hunted around till I'd found the house.

It was splendid, even by night—a big, solid pile of stone, set in the middle of a couple of acres of ground, with its square, heavy shoulders showing solid and impressive against the wintry sky. It wasn't much lit up, excepting in two or three rooms, as if there was nobody at home there to speak of either; it looked dull and somber and depressing, with the cold wind and the bare, stiff trees helping that appearance a lot. Standing out there on the walk and staring up at it, I couldn't help won-

dering about the woman, Steve's wife, the mistress of this palace. She wasn't happy; that was a cinch. I was satisfied that what I'd seen the night before, at the theatre, wasn't just a passing coldness between them; it was only a small part of a long freezing spell. I wished I knew something about her—how she lived, and what she thought about, and such-like.

While I was wondering and staring a car stopped at the street corner below and a man got off, coming slowly up the walk toward me, traveling with a bad limp. I couldn't see anything of his shape, on account of his ulster; but the limp seemed mighty familiar, and in a minute I was sure. It was Stocky.

"Why, hello!" I said to myself. "What's he doing around here? This ain't his part of town." And with that I hopped over the hedge, crouching down on the inside, out of sight.

He stopped before the gate, hesitating; then he went along up toward the house, keeping off the cement walk, stepping on the grass border, as if he didn't want to make the least bit of a noise. He didn't go up onto the porch. There was just barely enough light to let me see the big, shadowy bulk of him creeping from one window to another, trying to look in. Only he couldn't do it; the windows were too far from the ground.

Then I saw him duck down, quick; and then the front door was jerked open and slammed shut again, and Steve Morton came hurrying down, going out of the gate and over to the car corner. There was a dead silence till a car came by and took Morton downtown. When he was gone Stocky went up the steps and rang the bell. Steve's wife came to the door herself and let him in, and I saw him stoop over and kiss her, she turning her face up to him and putting her arms around his neck. Then the door went shut.

"Well, gee whiz!" said little old Tut-Tut-Tommy, hiding out there in the dark. "Wouldn't that put a crimp in you, now? Stocky! And

she let him do it. Well, by Jupiter! there's no accounting for tastes."

He was in there for a full hour, with me squatting down in the shelter of the front porch, to keep out of the bitter wind, waiting for the next move and doing a sum in mental arithmetic to help pass the time—adding two and two together. Only I couldn't make anything out of it but a round little zero. No, sir, I was up in the air.

"He's in love with her," I told myself, "and he wants me to get that story so he can get Morton out of the way. That's it! Yes, but he said he wished to God it wasn't true. How do you explain that, Tommy?" And that was the way most of my figuring ended: just when I got an explanation all carefully marked out on my chart something inside of me would say, "Yes, but—" and then I'd have to start all over again.

After a while I got too near frozen to let my mind work any more, and all I could do was to sit there and shiver and wait. I heard the downtown clocks ring ten, by-and-bye; and then the door opened again, right above me, and Stocky and the woman were standing together in the half-dusk of the vestibule, with him working his arms into his heavy overcoat. When he had it buttoned up and his cap pulled down over his ears, he drew her to him, one arm about her beautiful shoulders.

"Good night, bub-beloved," I heard him say. "I wish I could see you oftener; but I kuk-can't run the chance of meeting Steve. Pup-please the Lord, it won't bub-be so forever."

She had her lovely head down on his shoulder, snuggling against him. She drew away from him a bit, holding him at arm's length.

"I *must* see you sometimes," she said. "Thinking of you is all that makes my life endurable. You don't know how dreadful the days are."

He bent over and touched her soft hair with his lips. "Dud-dear girl!" he said, hardly above his breath. Then a long, long stillness. "I gugguess you're right," he went on. "We kuk-can't risk the scandal of a separa-

tion; there would be bub-bound to be scandal, and it would tut-take too long to live it dud-down. I gugguess we'll just have to wait."

She put up her lips to him again. "You must go now," she said. "He'll be coming home pretty soon. But I'll get word to you when I know he's going to be away, so you can be with me."

He kissed her again—twice or three times; then he limped down the steps and out to the street.

I was stiff and sore and mad and plumb disgusted when I crept out, after I'd given him time to get away.

"The old fool!" I croaked. "The bald, blind, stuttering old fool! Yes, and she's another one. Think of being made love to by a man that calls a woman 'bub-beloved'! No, sir, it's a solemn truth that there's just no accounting for tastes."

## VII

THERE were three or four days after that when I was in a pretty contrary state of mind, not caring a little bit about the story, and not even able to think about it without having my disgust come back on me. Every time I looked at Stocky, sitting at his desk and pottering over his work, with that solemn, benevolent, conscientious look of his, I'd be saying to myself, "You old fraud! You wicked old sinner!" And when I'd go back and remember his talks to me about "dud-duty" and "tut-tut-truth" and all that, I'd have to think, "You rank old hypocrite! Oh, you're mighty cunning, but you can't play me for a fool any more. If you want your potatoes raked out of the hot ashes, you can just blister your own fingers at it; you won't see any burnt scars on mine."

That's the way I felt. I was just about ready to quit my job and take up something not quite so lofty and high-minded as journalism. And while I was fussing it out with myself I wasn't doing anything more on my

run than soldiering around, not rustling for stuff at all, but taking only what flew in my face.

It isn't good for a man to feel that way; and my spell didn't last long. It was my story that lifted me out of it, in spite of my grouch.

Twice during the next week I ran across the Honorable T. Collins; once in the daytime, and once at night. Both times he was blind drunk; and both times Pete was with him—Pete Fahey, the councilman from the Second Ward. Fahey was one of Morton's chattels—a dirty little grafter who didn't make any bones about it and who didn't even pretend to get mad when somebody called him a thief and a scoundrel. I found out all about him later; and because of what I found out he's doing time in the pen right this minute. Oh, I've done some work, these two years. But that tale isn't this one. All I've got to say about Pete now is that he was sticking to Timmy like a burr when I saw him, towing him from one saloon to another; keeping sober himself, but pouring a regular waterfall of booze into T. Collins.

At the end of the week I saw Timmy again, with no Pete in sight. He was pretty well over his drunk then, but with his nerves horribly shaken, and his eyes bleared, and his clothes showing to a dead certainty that he hadn't had them off for bed in a good while; and when I ran against him he was standing in the lobby of the Tuxedo with Ikey Epstein, the slush-fund agent of the City Water Works Company, asking Ikey to lend him twenty dollars. It wasn't hard to add two and two there and make the answer come out right; I knew that Timmy was all in.

"Uh-huh!" I said to myself. "So they've got him skinned, have they? Now there'll be some doings, Tommy. What are you going to do, boy? Let it go past you? Well, not much you won't!" No, sir. With that staring me in the face, I clean forgot Stock's share in the business, and I made up my mind I'd stay with it to the last

ditch, if I could. I couldn't help it; the thing got into my blood.

And I copped out the next move in the game, too. It wasn't any cleverness of mine, nor any planning; it was just my royal luck. You bet I'm a believer in luck! How else can you account for this thing I'm going to tell you?

It was the second or third morning after the day when I'd seen Timmy making his Epstein touch. I'd made my rounds of the building and had worked around to the mayor's office about half-past ten. When I went in there wasn't a soul in the outer room; Frances and the Molloy boy both gone somewhere, and the room empty of the usual gang of tattered, evil-smelling loafers that always hang around such places, begging or looking for some kind of a snap. It was as quiet as a place where a famous dead person is stretched out in state. I couldn't understand it; but I do now: My luck—that's all.

The door that led to Timmy's private room was standing open a crack, but with no sound coming out. I slipped up and peeked through; and there was the old boy piled up on his leather sofa, dead to the world, with his heavy, purple face bloated from his big debauch, and the air of the room smelling thick and stale. Oh, it was a sweet picture, and he the Right Honorable Chief Executive of a big American city!

I wasn't exactly responsible for what I did; I was so interested I didn't stop to think. I pushed the door a little wider open and stepped into the inner room. There wasn't any danger of waking him; his deep, drunken way of breathing showed me that. I wanted to take a close look at him, and I went over beside the couch and stood staring down at him, wondering and disgusted.

I'd been there a couple of minutes when the outside door swung open so suddenly it made me jump, and I heard a heavy step coming in from the hall. I got ready to duck out; but through the crack of the door I saw Steve Morton. The sight of him rather paralyzed me. I stood for a

little time, watching him as he came inside the rail, looking around. Then he came straight toward the private door. I didn't have time to figure anything out; I just made a quick dive for underneath the sofa.

Talk about luck! If I had weighed two ounces more I couldn't have made it. There wasn't room for my heart to beat, there wasn't room for me to draw my breath; there wasn't room for anything but just me, spread out so flat that you'd have had to use a griddle-cake turner to turn me over on my back! And I was just in time, too; I hadn't more than wiggled under and pulled my feet in out of sight when Steve walked in and halted by the door. I couldn't see anything but the lower end of his legs; but they told me a whole lot. He was standing as I'd done, looking down at Timmy; only he didn't waste any time in meditation.

"You damned brute!" he growled; and then he walked over close and laid hold of the Right Honorable, giving him a shake. "Tim!" he called. "Tim; say, Tim! Get awake, will you! You drunken beast! Tim!" And with every word I felt the big, heavy body sag down against me as Steve pushed and shoved at it. "Tim! Wake up, you infernal soak!"

It took quite a while; but by-and-bye I felt the old boy stir and heard his sleepy, thick voice: "Git out to th' divvle wit ye! W'ot ye doin'? Murder! Me head—oh, me head!" And with that he sat up on the edge of the lounge, groaning. "Can't ye l'ave a man shlape? Oh, it's you, is ut? W'ot th' hell do ye want wit me, now?"

Morton gave a hard, dry laugh; then he stepped back and shut the door, locking it on the inside. After that there was a long wait, neither one of them saying a word, except for Timmy's sick, miserable muttering to himself. Steve threw himself down in Timmy's deep chair; and pretty soon he started what he had to say.

"Tim, look here: I've got to talk to you a minute. Are you sober enough to listen?"

Timmy swore—a deep, stout Irish

oath that didn't leave much unsaid. He was one of the sort that seem handicapped in trying to express themselves in common, clean English; the few times I've heard him try it sounded weak and foolish. This time he went at it without his handicap, and before he was finished the atmosphere down there under the sofa was so moist and hot it made me gasp.

Steve didn't seem to pay any attention; he let the old chap pitch and snort till he'd tired himself out, without trying to break the spell. But presently it died away, and then Steve started again.

"Yes I know that's the way you feel toward me. Let it go at that. It won't prevent our talking business. I'd rather have you friendly, of course; but maybe it's all the same. Here's what I want to say: You've been opposing me for the last year in every deal I've tried to put through with the city. I'm not finding fault with that. There's no use in discussing ancient history now. But I want to see if we can't agree on a change—a change that will be of benefit to both of us."

Timmy started to swearing again; but it sounded as if he'd spent most of his strength in the first spurt, because he didn't put much ginger into this one, and it dwindled away to nothing but a discouraged mumble. When it was over Steve went ahead as if there hadn't been any interruption.

"I've had several chances to make some good money on these contracts, if I could have succeeded in inducing you to let them go through. I don't hold any grudge on that account; I'm simply refreshing your recollection. You know what they were. But I've fallen over you every time. What's the matter, Tim? Haven't I offered money enough?"

I guess he wasn't trying to be dramatic. The question came out in the commonest, matter-of-fact tone, as if they weren't discussing anything in particular. I listened hard, expecting a fresh explosion from his honor; but it didn't come; there wasn't anything but deep, dead silence for



as much as a minute. Timmy's feet were on the rug close to my head. They didn't stir; so I knew he was listening and thinking. The signs seemed to encourage the Morton boy.

"Here's the point now, Tim," he said, in just the same commonplace way. "This is between us. I've got a new gas contract framed up, ready to go through the council. But I'm not going to try it unless I can get you to leave it alone. Understand? I don't ask you to approve it; just don't veto it, and let it take effect that way, after the seven days, without any action at all from you. That's all I ask; and I'll make it worth your indulgence. There won't be any howl from the people; we'll furnish gas to private consumers cheaper than they get it from the old company, making it up on the contract with the city, so it'll come to just the same thing in the end. I'm not asking any advantage over the old company; all I want is to get a footing against them on the terms they've got. I'll give you my word it won't affect your political future half as much as it will to be unreasonable. Here it is, Tim, boiled down: You're not a rich man, are you?"

No answer from Timmy.

"I don't suppose you've got more than twenty-five thousand dollars in the world, have you?" Morton insisted.

Still no answer from Timmy but a choking sigh.

"Well," says Morton, "you're getting to the time of life when you've got to do something to provide for yourself, or you'll be up against it. You owe it to yourself. Now I'm not posing as a philanthropist; I'm just giving you one of the chances you need. You can take it without doing yourself or anybody else a bit of harm."

Still all I could see was their feet. I'd never known before how much you can see in feet when you can't see anything else. The Morton man had his planted square on the floor, confident and prosperous-looking in their stylish, well-kept shoes; anybody could have told that he wasn't a little bit anxious about the outcome. But it

was different with Timmy. His shoes were muddy and all bulged out of shape, and the feet inside them were beginning to shuffle restlessly, twitching and jiggling up and down; anybody could have seen that he was trimming and balancing in his mind. I didn't need to look at their faces.

There was another long stillness. Then I heard Timmy fetch a deep breath.

"Quit foolin' wit me," he growled.

Steve laughed a nice, comfortable, friendly laugh; and the friendliness was in his voice when he spoke, though the words read like a cold, hard punch straight from the shoulder.

"All right, Tim. Here's what I want to say: I've got papers all drawn, ready to incorporate my concern so soon as I know this thing is right. We're capitalized for half a million. Now, then, you don't have to commit yourself by a word or a pen-scratch; all I ask of you is that you'll keep your hands down at your sides and let the franchise go through as I've indicated. I'll frame the thing up so none but its good points will show; and after it has passed the council I'll do all I can to make you safe by having a strong citizens' committee wait on you, to urge the rights of the people against the fat old monopoly—you know the line of talk. I'll fix up a good, strong committee, with none but the right men on it. You'll be absolutely safe."

It sounded to me a good deal like talky-talk against time, I was listening so hard for the climax. So was Timmy; I could tell by his fidgeting. And the Morton man seemed willing to let him wait, teasing and coaxing him along with his soft words and his pleasant smile, till I could see that Timmy was just about ready to jump—his nerves all strung up tight.

"Well, what of it?" says Timmy, after a little while.

"Why," says Steve, "this is what of it: You do as I ask, and I'll make over to you ten thousand of our capital stock. Now wait a minute," for Timmy had started an impatient protest, "wait till I've finished; if you

don't like it, that will give you plenty of time to say so. Here's the idea: I don't want to offer you money outright; that would be too coarse, and the fact might possibly embarrass you in the future. But there's no possible objection to your making a legitimate investment in a good, safe stock, is there? Appearances will protect you. We're going to put a small block of the stock on the market if things go right—enough to make your holding and two or three others look straight. It will be transferred at par; and if you ever feel the need of realizing on it, I'll guarantee to find you a buyer at par or better, any time. You may need some ready money some time. Now, Tim, you'll see I'm not offering to buy your signature, nor to pay you for any official action of yours. All you need do is to do nothing; so your conscience can be perfectly easy."

That's what my high-school logic-book called sophistry; I could see it, even lying there squashed out flat on my face. But old T. Collins didn't seem to see it; he'd never studied a text-book on logic, I reckon. The way Steve Morton put it up to him, in his smooth, calm voice and smiling his fadeless smile, the argument was just far enough above his intelligence to look perfectly sound. That was a trick of Steve's—to keep his talk above the intelligence of the other fellow, in a case like that. I judged by the look of Timmy's feet that he was plumb pacified and willing. But he made one last kick.

"I hate ye!" he snarled. "I've got good grounds, ye damned meddler. Ye've been interferin' wit me ever since I got in here. I hate ye for ut!"

Steve loosed his deep, rich laugh again. "I know you do," he said, pleasant as Springtime. "I know you have; but that's no reason why you should pass up a good thing like this. That would be only spiting yourself. I'm making you a good offer, Tim, because I've got to have you on my side. You know that as well as I do."

"An' what if I won't do ut?" says Timmy.

Steve's voice didn't change by so much as a hair. "Why, that would be unfortunate all around," he said. "I may as well talk frankly. You've made worse deals than this during the year—and taken cash for them. You got five thousand from the C. & P. Railroad for approving the ordinance granting them track privileges on Woodward avenue. You got two thousand for your signature to that bill-board ordinance. You got one thousand for your influence in that market-house steal; and there are several other little items. I'm not throwing them up to you as accusations; I'm merely mentioning them to let you know that you needn't speak of your private scruples. This is a better proposition than any of them—bigger money, and a lot less risky than the others. I hope you'll take it. But if you don't—since you ask it—let me remind you that I'm in a position to cut off all those little benefits. I control a majority in the council, you know, so that I can block any proceeding of that sort at any time. I've let them go through heretofore because I thought it would help you to realize that I wasn't altogether unfriendly to you. If those things are stopped, you wouldn't have anything but your salary; and you can't get along decently on that. Besides, in plain words, Tim, if it's worth my while I can stop your salary at the end of your present term. I'm in a better way than I was before—got a lot better organization in town, amongst my men. If I want to do it, I can retire you to private life, sure; and furthermore, in that case it isn't unlikely that the stories of these other deals of yours would get out and make disagreeable talk. You'd be in a bad fix."

Right there is where Mr. Stephen Morton blundered. He forgot that Mr. Timothy Collins was an elementary sort of an Irishman, in the first place; in the second place, he forgot that those elementary Irishmen are natural-born scrappers and can't be driven through a hole in the fence any

more than a pig can; and in the third place, he overlooked the circumstance that this particular elementary Irishman was just getting over a big drunk, with his temper all raw and sore and sensitive to the least bit of a prod. Steve's hint of a fight acted like a torch set against an oil-soaked campaign bonfire—it made Timmy flare up in a roar of blaze and thick, black smoke.

I'm not telling you what he said; I can't. There was one thing he did understand, that man, from top to bottom—and that thing was the art of plain and fancy, sacred and profane swearing. Everybody excels at something or another, I reckon; and that was Timmy's excellence. It took him all of five minutes to empty himself; and then he was on his feet, stamping up and down the floor, with his swearing coming in short, gasping bursts, as if he'd worn himself clear out.

"Now," says he at the last, "you git out o' this, you—! Git! If you ever poke your head in that door again, it'll git bruk. Undhershtand? It'll git bruk by me. Git, before I take me fut to ye!"

It didn't seem to phase the Morton man, because he kept his chair, with his shiny feet set square on the rug, without a tremor of excitement; and his voice sounded as placid as a pigeon on the barn roof.

"Come, come, Tim!" he laughed. "You'll get over this in a minute. I'm in no hurry this morning. Take a little while to get your breath."

I don't know what would have happened on top of that, because there was where I butted in and interrupted. I didn't mean to; but the janitors hadn't swept under the couch for months and months, and the dust got in my nose. I felt it coming, and tried to get my hand up to pinch it off; but I was so crowded that I couldn't move fast enough, and so there wasn't anything to do but let her rip—and I come of a family whose men-folks sneeze real hearty. Whee-e-e! It made the sofa bounce clear up off the floor.

And it made Timmy and the Morton man bounce off the floor, too. They

went straight up; I could see a good six inches under their feet.

"What th' divvle!" says Timmy, after he'd lit. I just lay there, without breathing or thinking or anything—just waiting. Steve Morton didn't utter a syllable; he didn't do a thing but stoop over, quick, and stick his inquisitive eyes into my seclusion.

"Good-bye, pretty world!" I said to myself, and a dull sort of resigned feeling came over me. Steve went to the lower end of the sofa and caught hold of my feet, pulling at them to drag me out; but I drew as deep a breath as I could, to make myself fit tighter, so when he pulled me along the floor the furniture slid with me.

"Take hold, Tim," he said; and the two of them lifted the heavy thing off, leaving me lying there, flat and dusty and scared. When I think back to that minute, I certainly feel sorry for poor little Tut-Tut-Tommy!

I didn't make a move to get up till Morton caught me by the collar and pulled me onto my feet, holding me off at arm's length, glowering at me, his smile gone. The room was awfully still, except for the roar in my ears. Honest, I was afraid. After a bit Morton gave me a shove, making me stagger backward and sit down hard on the floor against the wall, with him standing over me, looking tremendously big and impressive. I didn't want to try to get up.

"So," he said, "this is the way you keep faith, is it? You infernal little spy!"

I couldn't think of anything to say back to him; I didn't want to talk any; all I did was to wait till he turned to Timmy.

"Tim," he said, short and sharp, "there's a closet in this junk-room beyond. Can we put him in there and hold him?"

Timmy nodded, and the Morton man bent over me and got busy. I couldn't get the courage to yell till it was too late—till he had a thick silk handkerchief crowded between my teeth, with the long ends drawn around and tied tight at the back of my neck,

and then I couldn't make any sort of a noise except a dry, gagging squeal. Steve didn't seem to mind that; he knew what he was doing. He lifted me up and pushed me ahead of him into the next room, with Timmy holding the door open. It was a littered place, behind Tim's private office, away from the corridors—a room that was used for keeping the musty old papers and records that had been gathering since the city was started. Nobody ever came there oftener than once in six months, to bring in a new armful of truck for storage. Over in the far corner Timmy opened another door, showing a deep closet with a lot of thick records piled on the floor; and Steve pushed me in, blocking the doorway with his body.

"You'll stay here till I make up my mind what I'm going to do with you," he said. "Understand this: We'll come to terms before you get out." And with that he shut the door and locked it, and the two of them went away.

I sat down on the pile of books to think. I was so rattled that it was a long time before I even thought of untying the handkerchief around my face. When I'd got it loose, I opened up and yelled till my throat was raw; but even while I was doing it I knew well enough it was no use. The door was oak, a good two inches thick; and there was the room beyond, and then Timmy's room, with two more doors like this one. Nobody could hear me, not in a hundred years. It was pitch dark in there, without even a crack or a glimmer. I amused myself for a while with kicking at the door and pounding with my fists; but all the good that did was to hurt my toes and knock the skin off my knuckles. So pretty soon I quieted down.

"Tommy," I said to myself, "we're up against it!"

### VIII

WELL, there I was. After a bit I got clear over my scare, and clear over

my kicking and yelling fit, and then I spent quite a little time in what they call virtuous indignation.

"It's an infamous outrage!" I said to myself—just as if I were telling myself something I didn't know. "Why, it's a crime! You can have them jailed for this. You can sue them for damages. What right have they got to play it on you this way? You're a free American citizen, aren't you?"

"Free?" the other part of me answered. "Why, sure! Free!" That's a right good word for a man to amuse himself with, trying to coax himself into believing that it means something. But does it? It didn't seem to with me, just then, when I actually thought about it. I was free to stay there till they came and let me out: that was about all of it. And there are lots of folks that way, every day, if they only knew it.

My brooding helped to pass the time, anyway, till by-and-bye when I began to get tired of thinking, and lonesome. Shut up in the dark, that way, I couldn't get any idea of how long it was; sometimes it seemed like weeks and weeks. I strained my ears till they popped, listening; but I couldn't hear a single sound except the far-away, ghostly rumbling of the big town outside—just a deep-voiced, faint jumble of noises, without a syllable separate enough for me to pick it out and know what it was. I began to get hungry and thirsty; it struck me that I must have missed a dozen meals, anyway.

And then, all of a sudden, just when I was getting sort of resigned to staying there forever, and starving to death, and losing my job, and losing out on my story, and everything, there came a sound that I could hear by itself, and my young, scared fool of a heart gave a high, joyful hop. I wish I could tell you about that sound. It was a low, sweet, tender sound—a girl's voice humming a soft, light bit of a tune, just as if she were doing it out of pure happiness; and when I listened, I heard a light, soft footstep besides, moving gently around on the other side of the

door. I knew right away what it meant, and I knocked on the door as quietly as I could, not to frighten her.

"Frances!" I called. "Oh, Frances!"

The sounds stopped short, so I knew she was listening.

"Frances!" I called again. "Let me out! I'm locked in the closet."

I heard her come over to the door.

"Why, who is it?" her voice said, close outside.

"It's I—Tommy Burke," I told her. "Please let me out."

"Tommy!" Just one word; but it sounded mighty good to me. She'd never spoken it before—not anywhere in my hearing. Honest, I was glad it had happened.

I heard her hand feeling at the lock; but the door didn't come open.

"The key's gone," she said. "Wait; I'll have to get the skeleton from one of the janitors."

She came in a minute; and then there was Tommy, taking a deep chestful of fresh air, standing in the broad daylight again, blinking down into the wondering, pale face of the Only Girl.

"Why, Tommy!" she said, and she put her light little hand on my shoulder, standing awfully close to me, looking up at me with puzzled surprise and—yes, I'll swear there was something else in her eyes. What could I do? I was tingling all over with relief and gratitude, and—oh, shucks! I just put my two arms around her, drawing her to me and holding her tight, letting my lips touch her soft hair.

She flamed up with the loveliest warm, living color over her cheeks and forehead, drawing gently away from me. I don't believe she was angry; if she was, she would most likely have shown it, wouldn't she? That's the way my mind jumped at it, and I was tempestuously glad and happy.

"Why, what does it mean?" she asked, with her eyes still on mine.

"Mean?" I said, like a quick echo. "Frances, girl, will you let me tell you what it means?"

Wasn't that pretty near like a man? I'd clean forgotten that there was anything else that needed explaining.

And I held out my arms again. But she dodged back.

"No, no!" she said. "Not that. How did you get in there—locked in, with the key gone? Tell me!"

That didn't take long. I told her the whole business—the high parts of it, I mean, so she could understand. She was dreadfully shocked, of course; but she didn't lose any good time over that.

"You must get away, quick," she told me. "The mayor will be coming back, pretty soon. He's gone out to lunch, and he told me he wouldn't be away an hour. Oh, hurry!"

"Lunch?" I said. "Frances, how long do you suppose I've been in here? What day is this, anyway?"

"Tuesday," she told me, while she was pulling me over toward the door. "Oh, do go, please!"

Tuesday! I'd been shut up in that closet for only a couple of hours. Wouldn't that kill you? I'd thought it was a week.

Little Frances was hurrying me out through Timmy's private office, holding me by the arm. But when we got to the door I stopped. She seemed so tremendously concerned about me, don't you see? I took her dear little hand between mine, holding it fast.

"Look here, girl," I said to her, "you've got to let me talk to you a minute, before I go. I won't budge another step till you do."

But she wrenched her hand away, fairly trembling with fear. "No, no!" she said. "Oh, Tommy, not now! You *must* go!"

"Well, then, you'll let me tell you some other time?" I said, setting my back against the door and standing fast.

"Oh, yes, yes!" she said. "Now go!"

"The very next time I see you? Will you promise me that?"

"I'll promise *anything*!" Maybe she wasn't feeling exactly responsible; and maybe it was wrong in me to play it on her that way. All right; let it go at that. But my conscience must be horribly callous, then, because I've never been sorry. I made another

quick reach, catching her hand again, before she could dodge, and kissed it.

"The very next time!" I said. "And it's going to be right soon, too. But I'm going now. Good-bye, and God bless you, girl."

Sudden? Oh, I don't know. Maybe that depends a little on how you're built, and who the girl is, and the circumstances, and all that. There are times when it's an advantage to a man to have one of these quick minds—a mind that doesn't have to squander valuable time in fussing over inconsequent details and arguing with itself. What's the use, when you know beforehand just exactly how the argument would come out in the end, anyway? I knew. Three weeks was plenty long enough for me.

Well, here: I keep forgetting that this isn't my story.

I ducked out through the building, without meeting a soul who knew me, and went down to the *Journal* building through the alleys. I was only a little bit behind with my stuff; there was plenty of time for writing the stories I'd picked up on my run earlier in the morning. After that I fooled around my desk till the paper was off, hoping there wouldn't be any afternoon assignments to take me out on the street, amongst folks. I didn't want to be seen; I was meditating a little surprise for the Honorable Stephen Morton. And things seemed to be going my way, for there wasn't a thing that happened to disturb my seclusion until it came time to go to the council meeting, that night.

I didn't go into the chamber, to take my place at the press-table. I wanted Steve to think I was absent: so I came around by the back corridor and into one of the committee rooms, behind the president's desk, holding the door open a crack and watching proceedings from there. There wasn't much doing, in the first part of the meeting; things were just droning along, with only enough members in their seats to make a quorum, and those were lolling back with their feet on their desks, half asleep. Morton wasn't there; neither

was the mayor; and pretty soon I noticed that the absentees were the chief ones in Steve's gang. It looked curious to me. I hadn't anything tangible to go by, but pretty soon I began to imagine that there was a kind of a strained feeling in the atmosphere, as if they expected something to come to pass. Morton's man, Fahey, was in his place, rolling off the talk about some little fool of a resolution that didn't amount to anything—just as if he were trying to keep the meeting from adjourning.

And before long the missing members began to drift in, one at a time, careless and casual, taking their seats, till they were all there; and after them came the mayor; and about the same time I saw Steve sauntering in by the rear door, taking a seat up close to the rail. Then I was dead sure that something was in the wind.

The gang hadn't more than floated to their places when Fahey moved a recess, and then the Solid Six gathered in a little knot back in a corner, with their heads together. Morton came through the gate and stopped to whisper with them for a second; then he passed on to the press-table, nodding to the boys and giving them some of his smooth talk. He was looking mighty cheerful and contented, as if nothing was worrying him on earth. The only sign I could see was that his eyes were restless and excited, turning every little while to watch what was going on over there in the corner. But I was dead sure that he hadn't missed me yet from the closet upstairs, because after a bit I heard him ask Barlow, the *Times* man:

"Say, where's the *Journal* boy—what's his name?—Burke? Where's Burke? Isn't he on duty tonight? I'm sorry. He's a nice youngster. I wish he was here: I was going to take you fellows down for a little supper tonight, after the meeting, and I wanted him along."

That's what he said; so I knew he wasn't suspecting anything.

"Oho!" says Tut-Tut-Tommy to himself. "He's just going to let me



stay up there in that dark hole, is he, until he gets this little deal of his put through? Look out, now, kid; stay awake!"

And that's what it looked like; because pretty soon the Solid Six got through with their secret confab, over there, and the recess was past. Frank Hoover was standing before the clerk's table, with a paper in his hand.

"Mr. President," he said, "I want fur to offer this here ord'nance, and I want fur to move that it be now read the first and second time by title and referred to c'mittee."

Somebody seconded him, and the clerk rushed through a jumble of words that nobody could understand. Hoover had beckoned to Pete Fahey and Vic Yancy, bringing them up by the table, and the minute the reading was over these three were ready to sign their names to a report-blank that Hoover had in his pocket, already filled out.

"Mr. President," says Hoover, "now I want fur to move that the ord'nance be received back from the c'mittee and read the third time by title and put on its passage."

It didn't take fifteen seconds. Then Hoover rolled over to the mayor's table and slapped the paper down in front of old Timmy, who had a wet pen in his shaking old hand, ready to stick his name on the back. It was all over a lot quicker than I can tell it; I didn't have time to think of doing anything to stop it, even if I'd wanted to. But it hadn't occurred to me to try to stop the deal; all I'd been working for was the story. And here it was, seeming to be rounded up to completeness right before my eyes.

Steve Morton hadn't appeared to take any interest in what was going on; he had stayed up there at the front of the chamber, sitting on a corner of the press-table, doing nothing more than look on, as if he were only a spectator—smiling his steady smile and carefully trimming the end off a cigar and fitting it into his amber mouth-piece. By the time old Timmy's fist was on the paper, and Hoover was

rubbing it dry on the desk-blotter, Steve had his smoke ready to light. He felt through his pockets, with a fine show of leisure, brought out a match, scratched it on his boot-heel, and lifted it between his scooped hands to his cigar-end. Then I opened my door and stepped out square in front of him, meeting his eyes full and fair.

He was a wonder, that Morton man. There isn't another man in the whole State who could show his nerve. Oh, it was lovely! He went all to pieces, inside of him; I could see it. But there wasn't a single outer fiber of him that betrayed him. His varnished shoe didn't miss a stroke in its slow back-and-forward swing; he didn't so much as skip a puff in lighting his cigar; when he was through with it, he took careful aim with the match-end at a brass cuspidor down at the other side of the table and sent the little stick straight at its mark. Nobody could have seen that his mind was all in a dizzy whirl of surprise—nobody but me, I mean. But I saw it, away deep in his narrow eyes—the shock, and the red flame of anger, and the jarring stoppage of his wheels of thought. He couldn't have expressed it so well in words if he'd tried.

It was just bully!

I walked over to my chair and sat down, and Morton gave me an easy, friendly nod, feeling in his pocket for another cigar and rolling it over to me.

"Hello, Burkel!" he said, his voice deep and quiet. "You're a little late tonight."

"Thanks," I said. "I'll smoke that after a while, when I'm writing my story. Yes, I am a bit late. There was a tiresome stiff who butted in on me this morning and interfered with my work some, so I've been a little behind all day. But I'm all caught up now, except for this meeting. Let me look at your notes a minute, will you, Barlow, to see what's been happening?" And with that I bent down over Barlow's scrawled sheets of copy-paper, trying to act awfully absorbed and busy.

Morton let me alone for a few min-

utes, keeping on with his smoke; then, a little while before adjournment, he bent over my shoulder, his face wearing the look of a man who is just going to tell a funny story to a particular friend.

"I want to talk with you," he whispered in my ear. "Come with me when the meeting's over."

"Oh, certainly!" I told him. "Where? A nice, private room somewhere, in a quiet place, where nobody's likely to interrupt us?" I was feeling pretty near in the humor for talking back to him in his own language.

"Anywhere," he said. "I've got to see you. We'll go down street with the crowd; and we'll drop into the Albemarle Café."

That sounded right enough. I was willing. I'd got my story now, and I was thrilling with young courage and independence. I wasn't afraid of him, nor afraid of his running any more bluffs on me; I felt just about able to take care of myself from that time on. So I went down with him to the Albemarle, and to a corner table where nobody would bother us. After we had given our orders it was Tut-Tut-Tommy that started the talk.

"I haven't got much time to spend here," I said. "I'm tired, and I want to go home and go to bed, so as to turn out early and get to work on this thing."

He wore his unfailing mask, for the benefit of anybody that might be watching us; but behind the mask he had dropped all false pretenses, and every word he spoke was in dead earnest.

"Your story?" he said. "So you're going to do it, are you?"

"I've been considering it," I told him. "Say, on the square, did you really think you had bought me the other day? Did you really think you had seduced me into laying down and letting you work this steal, just by feeding me a petty little fraction of your plunder? If you did, you've got a reputation for cleverness that you don't deserve."

His eyes were watching me like a hawk's, steadily, without a flicker of

feeling in them, excepting a burning alertness. That last question struck a flash of light.

"Petty little fraction," he said after me, in a way that showed he thought he'd discovered a hidden meaning in the words. "Look heré, Burke, let's talk straight: Will money induce you to get off this story of yours and let it alone?"

"It will not," I said.

"Two thousand? Three thousand?"

"Two or three thousand! You and your people stole as much as that from Mayor Collins in a single night. Easy money!"

"Well, any sum within reason, Burke."

"Not if it was two or three million. Maybe you can't understand it; but I'm not for sale. I'm going to write this story and turn it in."

He was perfectly calm. "It won't do a bit of good," he said. "Of course, I want to avoid publicity in the matter—not on my own account, but on account of the men who have helped me. It might hurt them, but it can't injure me; it can't affect me at all or make any difference in the benefits I'm going to get out of this contract."

"Why can't it?" I asked. "It's a rank steal, and irregular besides, in the way it was put through. You had no right to rush it through on the same night it was introduced; under the rules it ought to have lain over for two weeks, before the third reading. Neither of the other papers will say a word about it; you're safe there. But if the *Journal* prints the facts as they happened tonight, with what I know of what went before, why won't it make a difference?"

"It won't, though," he told me.

"Oh," I shot at him. "You mean that if it gets into the courts, your bought judges will make you safe, anyway? Is that it?"

He shrugged his broad shoulders. "That's my affair," he said. "I'm not obliged to discuss that with you. What I'm talking to you about is your own welfare. You may have a notion that to write that story and get it in

print will be bold and smart, and all that. Maybe it would. But if you've taken the trouble to inform yourself, you know that I'm not a man who forgets a good turn or a bad one. Why, the biggest part of my enjoyment in life is in playing even with those who make war on me, in the way you're proposing—by interfering with me in politics or business. Haven't you found that out? Now, you tell me again: Aren't you disposed to be reasonable?"

I wasn't in the frame of mind for stopping to reconsider. "If you mean to ask whether I'm willing to quit—*No!*"

"Very well," he said quietly. "Then let's have a complete understanding while we're about it. If you write this story, and if it gets printed, you'll have an enemy in me, where you might better have a friend, if you care for your own future in this town. I'll give you my word that you'll never be able to amount to anything here while I'm against you. I sha'n't count time or trouble or expense. Once a man gets on my blacklist he stays there for good. I can hurt you and harass you in a hundred ways you don't suspect. Why, look at this, for instance!"

He stuck his hand in his inside coat pocket and brought out a long envelope, taking from the envelope three or four papers and holding them up so I could see. They were promissory notes and a mortgage, with my dad's name signed to them.

"I don't mind telling you that I anticipated a little stubbornness on your part," he said, with his voice on the same dead-level, "so I got possession of these today, just to show you what you'll be up against. You'll notice that they're all long over-due, with a good bit of interest unpaid, besides the principal. But I don't stand to lose anything; the old gentleman's homestead is security. If you know anything about his circumstances, you know he can't rake up so much money now—he simply can't do it. Foreclosure would mean that he would

have to spend the rest of his days in another home, some place. And he's rather fond of his home, isn't he? He's lived there ever since he was married, they tell me. And these papers are mine, Burke, to do as I like with."

He had me in a bad trance, staring, without the power to move or think, and with that cold, hard face, grim and bold and strong, grinning at me like one of the hideous faces you see in a nightmare. He had spoken a lot truer than he could possibly have known. Without any effort of my will, my old dad came into my thoughts haunting me. He did love his home, and the peace and quiet and comfort he was enjoying there with his books, after a hard life—a life without a stain on it. God bless him! I say that with my whole heart. And, though the hurt is two years old now—old enough to have let me grow calm over it—I say with my whole heart, Damn the relentless brute who sat across the table from me that night!

It was a long time before I could get even the feeblest move on my thoughts; and then my fighting temper was all gone, and I was sitting on the defensive. I know perfectly well that he meant just what he said—that he wouldn't stop at anything; and across my mind there floated what seemed like a thick gray film of discouragement.

"Good Lord, it isn't worth the cost!" I caught myself whispering.

Steve waited for me, never shifting his eyes from mine for a second—waited until he saw for a certainty how I was fixed.

"Well," he said then, with his easy calm; "well, what do you say? It's up to you."

"I can't say anything, yet," I told him. "I'll have to think about it. I didn't know——"

He folded up the papers and put them back in his pocket, pushing away from the table.

"I'll wait until morning," he said. "I'll be at the City Hall by the time you get there. You're not to write a word of this stuff until you've talked

with me again. If you do, by God, you'll regret it. Now you may go."

## IX

FROM the Albemarle I went straight home. The proposition had got too big for me; I had to have help, and I turned to the place where I'd always gone for help, ever since the time when life first began to bother me—to my dad.

He was sitting up for me, as he always did when I was out at night. When I turned the last corner I saw the shaded light in his window; and when I let myself in and went down the hall to his library, there he was, in his dressing-gown and slippers, before the open fire, with a big book open on his reading-stand and the soft light from the reading-lamp touching his white hair. For years and years I'd been used to that picture, but until that minute I'd never begun to realize how I loved it.

He turned around as I went in, his kind, bright old eyes smiling at me.

"Well, my son!" his gentle old voice said, with a note in it that was like a caress. If we hadn't been apart for more than an hour, that was always his greeting to me. "How has the work gone today? I missed you at dinner. Something extra, was it? Come up by the fire and tell me about it."

I threw off my overcoat and went over to him.

"Dad," I said, "it's something unpleasant this time. I'm in trouble, clear up over my chin, and I've got to talk it over with you."

"Trouble?" he said, like a gentle echo. "Oh, nothing serious, I hope. Yes, tell me what it is."

I began at the beginning and went straight through to the end, giving him just the big, plain facts, without trying to color or change anything—leaving out nothing except that night at Morton's house, when Stocky was there with the woman. I skipped that part, because it looked ugly, and I wasn't sure, and it was only a side-line on the story, anyway. But the rest of

the tale my dad got just exactly as it was.

He listened very quietly, without interrupting once. When I'd finished he wasn't smiling any more, but his eyes were looking steadily into mine.

"Well, well!" he said, after a minute. "The scoundrell!" He sat quite still for a little while, with the slow blood bringing a faint flush to his thin cheeks; then he got up and began walking up and down the floor, his stooping shoulders drawing up straight. By-and-bye he stopped beside me, fingering his white beard, his eyes kindling into a slow, steady fire.

"Tom," he said, and his voice seemed to have a man's full strength in it; "Tom, Stephen Morton knows how and why that debt of mine was made—ten years ago, when I put up some money for a friend Morton was trying to ruin. He ruined him, too, before he quit; he doesn't quit till he gets what he's after. And now it's in his hands! Oh, the infamous scoundrell! Why—why——"

If dad had been twenty years younger, there would have been some language; but seventy-three years will sap a man's temper in spite of him. He began again his walk forward and back, thinking hard, with me just keeping still and waiting till he came to his chair and dropped into it.

"Tom," he said, "it's on my account that you're troubled?"

"Yes," I told him.

"And Morton thinks I'm too old and you're too young for a fight. But do you doubt what I would have you do?"

I didn't want to answer that right away. "Look here, dad," I said, "don't you suppose we could make a new deal, maybe—get somebody else to make a new loan that would let us take care of Morton?"

He seemed a little absent-minded about that. "Perhaps—perhaps," he said. "I'll try, of course; but values have dropped a good deal since I borrowed this money, and the security doesn't give margin enough now. Maybe I can find a friend to take it

up. I have some friends in town, though they're not as numerous as they used to be—naturally. They've been dropping off, and the new men have new views of things. But that doesn't matter!" He put it aside with an impatient motion of his hand. "We mustn't stop now to debate trivial things. You must go on with your work, and let that take care of itself."

I was about ready to cry—utterly miserable and unhappy.

"Dad, I can't!" I said. "It isn't worth what it will cost. What is it, anyway, but a sensational newspaper stunt? That's all it is; and my doing it won't make a bit of difference to the town. Two days after it was printed nobody would care. I'd a lot rather quit the business, right now, and find something else to do. I simply won't do it."

His face was drawn with the first real hurt it had shown.

"Yes, you will," he said. "You'll do it because you are your father's son, and because I wish it. Why, Tom, listen! You're not going to shame me by sordidness. Let me tell you this: If I had cared for money above other things, I might have been a rich man a dozen times over. Nothing is easier than wealth if a man sets his heart on it and is willing to make compromises with himself for it. I have steadily refused to make those compromises. I want you to keep that old-fashioned faith and pass it on to your children after you. Oh, I know what you're thinking—that I haven't long to live, and that you want to have my last days comfortable. But do you honestly think you can make me so by playing the coward? You know me better than that. Here's the question, in plain terms: Are you going to class yourself with the Steve Morton stripe of men, or with the type your father has tried to stand for? That's what this thing means to you, exactly. Don't humiliate me by compelling me to persuade you."

"And you don't care, dad?" I asked. "If it comes to the worst,

you'll trust me to make a living for us both—a poor, plain living on my mean little pay? You don't care for that?"

He reached out and got hold of my hand, drawing me over close to him.

"Son," he said, "there's only one thing in this world I really care for in any man, whoever he is: Steadfastness. That's all I can say."

It was eleven o'clock when I wilted. But I couldn't wait for morning; I went to the telephone and rang up Morton's house. He wasn't there—hadn't got home yet. Then I hunted up Liz Taylor's number, and she came to the 'phone herself.

"Say, is Steve Morton there?" I asked her. "Well, stand him up, please." You can judge from that about how Tut-Tut-Tommy was stacking. And in a minute, when Steve's big bass voice boomed at me, I gave it to him straight.

"This is Tom Burke," I told him. "I reckon your time is valuable, and I might as well save you from wasting any of it by waiting to see me tomorrow. I just wanted to tell you to go ahead with your rat-killing."

Even over the wire his voice sounded cool and steady and calculating.

"Tell me what you mean," he said. "Have you come to your senses?"

"Sure! My story goes in tomorrow."

I could hear his slow, hard breathing for a full minute; then, without another word, he hung up his receiver and I went back to my dad, stepping high and light.

## X

WHEN I got to the office in the morning, there was old Stocky at his job, milling over his galleys of overset stuff, with his nose down close; and there were the boys of the bunch, doing the useless little things they always had to do before they struck their runs. I could hardly wait till the time came for them to drill out. I went along with them till we hit the streets; but then I turned back and stood beside Stock's desk.

"Mr. Stockton," I said, "I suppose you've seen by the morning papers that Morton's deal went through the council last night."

He looked up with a start, his half-blind eyes squinting at me.

"Oh, it's you, Burke? Went through, dud-did it? Well?"

"Well, and I've got my story now."

"What? Gug-got it? Gug-got it *all*?"

"The whole thing—hat, boots and breeches. I can write it whenever you say so."

He settled back in his chair, with that same old lifeless look coming across his face. It took him a good while to make up his mind about the next word, though it didn't amount to much when he had it ready.

"Tut-tut-tell me."

So I had to go over it again for him, and with never a sign from him—not so much as the tremble of an eye-winker. When I had finished he sat just so for a long time, humped down in a still heap, his eyes vacant and his hands clutching the arms of his chair. When he spoke to me, after a while, his voice sounded dead and wooden.

"All right, Bub-Burke; write it. Gug-go at it now. I'll pup-put somebody else on the City Hall for today. Write it as you've tut-told it to me."

It took me two long hours at my machine. It was eleven o'clock when I wound up the last paragraph. People had been drifting in and out, and Stocky had talked to them, sitting close at his desk. The boys were beginning to come back from their first runs when I pulled my last page off the roller, got it all together and took it over to Stocky.

He read it through carefully, following the lines with his blue pencil, with me standing beside him and waiting. If I expected any enthusiasm, I didn't get it; he didn't give me a syllable, one way or the other. When he had plodded along to the last line, he picked up the sheets and struggled out of his chair.

"Strong!" he called. "Is Bub-Billy Strong here? Kuk-come here, Strong. Let your stuff gug-go, and

take the dud-dud-desk, till I gug-get back. Space is tut-tight to the limit. Kuk-keep everything down. I've gug-got my lead story. Kuk-come with me, Bub-Burke."

He took me through the hall to the holy Front Room, where Managing Editor Jordan was reading and smoking, cool and calm and comfortable, with the look of a man who found it only kid's play to run a big newspaper, even with one eye tied behind him. That was the first time I'd been steered against Jordan, and my first look at his room.

He dropped his paper from in front of his face when we went in, snapping his eyes at us over the top of his glasses. Stocky laid his hand on my shoulder.

"Sus-say, Jordan," he stuttered, "this is mum-my new man—Bub-Bub-Burke. He's mum-made good on the stut-tory I was tut-telling you about."

Jordan didn't say anything; he gave me a quick, particular look, and then one to Stocky, and then another to the bunch of manuscript Stocky held in his hand. Stocky gave it to him, and he tipped back with his feet on his desk and began to read. Stocky motioned me to a chair and slouched down into one himself, sitting there with his chin on his shirt-front and his hands hanging loose in his lap, dull and stolid. Jordan read the story the same way he does everything—driving through it on a dead run, with his whole mind on it, and *seeing* it. You never have to tell him anything twice.

When he was through, he flipped the papers over onto his desk in a scattered heap, and then those two sat and stared at each other—stared and stared. Jordan's face was red and all the little muscles on his jaws and temples were twitching—but Stocky's face was the color of dusty leather, even to his lips. The only sign of life about him was in his big hands that were twisted together, with the big knuckles cracking. Neither of them paid a bit of attention to me.

By-and-bye Jordan took a long, snorting breath through his bony nose.



"Well, whataboutit?" he jerked out of him. "It seemstobestraight. What doyouwanttodo?"

Stocky's lips stirred the least trifle, and his voice sounded as if it came out of one of those little jiggermen the ventriloquists use in the vaudeville shows.

"I'm gug-going to pup-print it this afternoon," he said.

Jordan gave another harsh snort. "Allright," he snapped. "You're runningthatend. Doasyoulike." He picked up the manuscript again, bunching it together and passing it over to Stocky. "Giveittooneofthe bestmen; haveitrewritten; tellhimto knititupcloser." Yes, that's what he said. *My story!* And with not a word to me, nor so much as a look out of the corner of his eye.

Stocky got up out of his chair, moving as if it hurt him—a part at a time, standing with his game leg twisted under him.

"You'd bub-better go ahead with the other pup-pup-part of it," he said, almost in a whisper. "We mum-might as well dud-do a kuk-complete job while we're about it."

Jordan pulled off his eyeglasses, twiddling them in his fingers, holding himself in his chair as if every nerve in him was a steel wire stretched tight.

"Stockton!" he said. "Tellme: Isthatthewayyoufeel?"

Old Stocky gave a slow nod; then, without a word, he turned away and went out of the door, pulling it shut behind him. The room was awfully still. I sat where I was, because I didn't know what else to do, listening to the shuffling sound of Stocky's limp going down the hall, getting fainter and fainter till I couldn't hear it any more. Then there was only Jordan's nervous, quick breathing, as he sat the way Stocky had left him, thinking. He didn't seem to see me; he'd forgotten all about me.

Pretty soon he pulled up his desk 'phone, and this is what I heard: "Hello! Countyattorney'soffice? That you, Stillings? Thisis Jordan, of the *Journal*. I wantyou to comedown, rightaway.

I've got something we've gotto get quick actionon. Allright."

He whirled around in his chair and saw me, and it startled him. "Eh?" he jerked. "Oh! You're Burke! Well, whatisit? Anything more to say?"

"No, sir," I said, and I drilled out to the city-room and over to the desk, sitting down to do some more slow waiting. One of the old men was working over my story, sending the finished sheets to Stocky, one at a time; and Stocky was blue-penciling them and giving them to the kid to be shot up the copy-tube; and between times the old boy was hard at it, building a big, gorgeous, three-column, seventy-two-point, five-bank slug to lead the first page—counting it off on his fingers and muttering the words over and over to himself—changing it over and over again, trying to get it to suit him. I've got that head yet pasted in my scrapbook, out home, and I'm keeping the opposite page for the clippings about my wedding.

The whole office seemed to be smouldering with excitement—keyed up to the last notch, with the boys gathered over in a corner, whispering among themselves. I was the only one that wasn't in it; I was clear neglected, ignored, effaced. I didn't count for anything at all; the man never does, I reckon, in a case like that, not till afterward. The story's the big thing. Only I hadn't found that out yet. I just sat and sat and sat, with my throat getting dry and my thoughts blurred.

By-and-bye Jordan came in and plunged over to the desk, his face redder than ever and his teeth set hard on the tattered wreck of a cigar.

"Makeanaddtoyourstory," he spit at Stocky. "I'vetalkedwithStillings. He'llfileinformationassoonasthey can be drawn — Morton — Collins — Fahey — the whole lot of them. They'll all be under arrest by night or early tomorrow. He's agreed to push it for all he's worth."

The grind went ahead for an hour, and it was working along pretty well toward press-time. I was beginning to feel that I couldn't stand the strain

much longer. Then the telephone jingled, over in the city-room box, and the kid called to me that I was wanted.

It makes me shiver to remember that part of it. It was a low, soft, still voice that spoke to me, with a kind of an icy dead sound in it.

"Is this Mr. Burke? I am Mrs. Stephen Morton. I must ask you to do me a kindness, if you will. I must speak with you for a few moments. Please say nothing to anyone until you have seen me. I am downtown in my carriage. You will find the carriage waiting on the corner by the Saratoga Hotel. It's only two squares from your office. I am very sorry to trouble you, but I cannot come there. Will you be good enough to come down? And please do not speak of it to anyone."

I got into my coat and hurried down the street, wondering. I didn't have any trouble in finding her. The carriage was there, pulled up beside the curb—a rich turnout, with a span of black beauties in silver harness and a stiff stick of a man in white-topped boots and gold-buttoned long coat up on the high seat. I was sure it was hers as soon as I saw it; and when I got up closer the carriage door swung open and there she was, bundled up to the ears in her rich furs, leaning over toward me.

If I live to be a feeble old man, by-and-bye, with nothing but memories to live on, I'll have to remember her as she looked then. I'd known she was beautiful, from that first sight I'd had of her at the theatre; but that look hadn't prepared me for this one. I don't believe I can make you see it as I did, even if I spent half a dozen sheets trying to tell you. It wasn't in the little details a man can write—the thick masses of black hair, nor the creamy cheeks with the burning flecks of scarlet, nor the blaze of excited light in her big, deep, dark eyes, nor any of that. Those things counted maybe, but the real splendor of her beauty was finer than that—like a delicate atmosphere, faint and subtle and wonderful.

Honest, do you want to know the thought that flashed over me right then when she first got her eyes fixed on mine? I'm not ashamed of it.

"Well, by ginger, Stocky, I don't blame you!" That was what I caught little Tut-Tut-Tommy saying to himself.

She didn't waste any time over foolish, polite preliminaries.

"You are Mr. Burke?" she said. "Thank you. You are very good. I sha'n't keep you long with what I have to say."

But it seemed a long time to me before she could find the words. She studied me carefully for a minute; then she leaned back in her seat, looking down into her lap, where her little hands were picking at the fur of her muff, just as I'd seen them picking at the plush on the box-rail that other night—picking, picking, picking. When she got ready to talk, her voice was so low that I had to stand up close to the door to hear, over the noises of the street.

"I sha'n't speak of my reasons for what I have to ask," she said. "I shall have to trust you to understand, without any explanations. You have some evidence against my husband, in some of his operations here in town. I know what it is—a hideous thing. I am not trying to justify him; there isn't any justification; but I want to ask of you—I want to beg of you not to write anything about it for your paper."

She stopped there, keeping her eyes downcast, leaving me gaping. I couldn't think of a blessed thing to say; I just had to leave it to her to take the next step.

"Oh, you can never understand how it shames me to speak of it!" she said, after a while, her voice a low, lifeless whisper. "I can't say anything more!" With a quick flash of movement she leaned toward me again, looking full at me, her lips trembling, her eyes shining with tears. "You are a gentleman," she said. "If you know that a woman's only hope of happiness is absolutely in your hands, can't you do what I ask?"

Well, now, see here: I'm Irish, a while back—good, old Simon—pure Irish, on both sides; and you know yourself, well enough, without being told, that no Irishman ever lived who could keep any stiffening in his neck with a beautiful woman making that kind of a pass at him. It just naturally fades him; that's all—fades him. I showed my pedigree, all right.

"I would if I could," I told her; and I'd have done it, too. Yes, sir; on my heart and soul, if the thing hadn't passed out of my keeping, she'd have got what she asked, without so much as a cheep of remonstrance from me, that's what. When I get to thinking it over, now and then, I get a little consolation out of that. I'd have done it, if I could. Only I couldn't, and I told her so.

"It's gone past me," I said. "I wrote the story this morning, and turned it in, and it's in type now, all ready to be printed. You'll have to come and talk to Mr. Stockton. I'll go up with you, if you'll let me. But we'll have to hurry; there isn't more than five minutes to spare."

She drew back into her corner, shuddering as if a heavy chill had taken her. "No, no!" she gasped. "Oh, I can't—I can't!" After a second or two she leaned over toward me again. "Can you tell me—Mr. Burke, what will it mean?"

I couldn't help it; I had to tell her. "I'm afraid it's pretty bad," I said. "The county attorney has it now, and he's going to proceed against Mr. Morton, and the mayor, and the others who are mixed up in it. If I could do anything——"

But she didn't wait for anything more. Her face was like white paper, and her eyes didn't see me any more at all. "Thank you," she said, hardly above her breath; and then she pulled the carriage door shut, drawing the shade down over the little plate-glass window, and the carriage turned out from the curb into the street, leaving me standing there in the deep middle of a thick fog.

Away off in the fog I seemed to hear

a faint cry, with the faint sound of a shot coming close after it; then I saw the elegant turnout pulled up sharp, with the horses plunging; and then the street swarmed with people, coming from everywhere, all at once, crowding around the carriage in a close jam, screaming and swaying. I couldn't make out what I was doing; but pretty soon I found myself shoving through the mass, getting as close as I could, till somebody else caught hold of me and pushed me off to one side—a big chap, with a red beard, and his hat gone, and his blue eyes full of anxious fire.

"Let me through!" he ordered. "I'm a doctor. Let me get through."

They made way for him, as well as they could, and he stuck his head and shoulders through the carriage door. But he straightened up again, quick, pale as a ghost and shaking all over.

"She's dead!"

I heard him; and then I came wide awake, breaking out of the crowd and tearing back to the office, going as if the Old Boy himself were reaching out for my coat-tail. I went up the two long flights of stairs, three at a time—head over heels; stumbling, gasping, my heart pounding. As soon as I set foot in the building I heard the slow, dull roar and rumble of the big presses going. I threw myself against the city-room door, bursting it open and tottering in, nearly falling against the desk.

The room was empty, except for Stocky, who sat in his place, bent down with his face hidden on his arms, and a first copy of the paper lying mused and damp beside him. He looked up as I tumbled in, his eyes dull.

"Mr. Stockton!" I yelled. "Wait, wait! There's more to that story! Mrs. Morton has shot herself. She's dead—in her carriage, down by the Saratoga Hotel."

When I'm lying in bed, in the dark, I can see his face as I saw it then—the unspeakable agony in it; and without half trying I can hear the agony in his voice:

"God!"

He got out of his chair, reeling back against the wall, putting his big, shaking hands over his twisted, worn old face. But that didn't last. In a second he made a long, limping jump for the press-room tube, calling to me as he ran:

"Sit down and write it—kuk-quick—tut-tut-ten lines." And on the way to my machine I heard him shrieking up the tube: "Stop the presses and pup-pull the first fuf-form open for a tut-ten-line add to the lead story. It'll be up in a mum-minute."

While I was getting my paper in the typewriter, I heard him go staggering out through the hall; and before I'd got started he was back again with Jordan.

"Goahead!" Jordan snapped at him. "I'll take care of it, and I'll be with you in a minute." And with that the old boy dragged on his hat and broke for the street in his shirt-sleeves, leaving Jordan standing fast in the middle of the door.

"Oh good God Almighty!" he groaned.

I couldn't help it; I just couldn't. My fingers wouldn't do a stroke till I knew.

"Mr. Jordan," I said; "what's the matter? Is there anything——?"

He came at me with his arms up over his head and his eyes a couple of young volcanoes.

"*She's his daughter!*" he yelled at me. "*Goon with your work, damn it! They're holding the paper for you!*"

## XI

WELL, maybe you think this little old town didn't boil over for a few days! It just certainly did; and before it was done, the boiling had cooked Mr. Stephen Morton's goose for him. By-and-bye the fury of it settled down to a steady, calm simmer; but it didn't quit for a year, and when the year was over, Morton had jumped his bond and was skulking down there somewhere in the Central American rubber-and-coffee country; and Fahey and Yancy and Hoover and the others of the Big

Six were in stripes, and old Timmy Collins had been found dead one morning, just before they were ready to put him on trial, lying on a billiard table in the back part of a Tenderloin saloon, where they'd put him the night before to sleep off a big jag. Yes, sir; inside of twelve months we had the gang busted and scattered. It took some blazing hard work; but we did it. And now the town has a decent mayor and a council that's playing square. I know that sounds like a fairy story; but it's true, just the same.

That's part of it; but that isn't what I want to tell you now. I've got to finish about poor old Stocky.

He was off watch for a long two weeks after that horrible day, with Bub-Bub-Billy Strong playing city editor and the rest of us mostly playing horse. I guess the paper didn't amount to much, except for the follow-stories on the Morton deal, and the suicide, and all that. There was plenty to write about, without having to hunt for it very hard—the arrests, and the arrangements, and all the excited gossip that cropped out, and such-like. And then on the second day we quit work, after the first morning edition, to go to the funeral—everybody, from Jordan to the kid.

Morton was there, and Stocky, standing across the grave from one another. That was the strangest part of it. I guess there's just no explanation for the different kinds of men you meet in this life, is there? Away down in the deeps of me I was sorry for old Stocky. He was all in; a poor, feeble wreck of a man. He was so quiet it fairly scared me to look at him—too deadly weak and weary to be able to show any feeling.

But that wasn't the way with Steve Morton. From first to last, there he stood, brushed and shined and without a hair out of place, holding himself straight and square, with that hard, cold, cruel look on his handsome face, every fiber of him in perfect control. I'd give a lot to know what he was thinking right then; maybe it would make me a trifle milder toward him

in my mind; but the only way I could think of him, as I watched him, was, "Brute, brute!"

Why, when the service was over, and they had dropped the first frozen earth down onto the box, and we were turning away to go home, Morton passed close to Stocky, not looking at him—looking just straight ahead. The poor old boy put out his shaking hand and caught hold of Morton's sleeve, his white face twisted with pain.

"Steve!" he said. "Steve!"

But Steve wouldn't hear him nor see him. He marched straight over to his carriage, pulling up his warm coat-collar and stepping in, with never a word nor a glance for anybody. You bet I'd like to know what he was thinking. But, Lord, how I hated him that minute! And I've hated him right along, ever since.

I didn't see Stocky, after that day, for nearly two weeks. But I saw somebody else. Maybe this doesn't belong in here; but it's kind of on my mind, and I might as well tell you.

Little Miss Frances Tracy is the one I mean. It happened out at her house, a week or so after the funeral. Oh, of course I'd seen her at the City Hall, more or less; but that was always with the Molloy boy padding around on his soft feet near-by, or with a lot of strangers loafing in the room with nothing to do but stare. A man can't say what he wants to, to the Only Girl, under such circumstances. I could see she was afraid I was going to, all the time, and I felt it tickling my throat more than once, but I choked it back till this night I'm telling you about, when I went out to the house, early, right after dinner.

She came to the door herself, lovely and sweet and shy—afraid of me, and afraid of what she knew I was going to say the minute I got a chance. She wouldn't give me the chance, out there in the hall; it began to look as if I weren't going to get it at all, because after I'd hung up my coat and hat she hurried me right on through the sitting-room, where her old mother sat beside the warm stove, wrapped

up in a warm shawl, with her spectacles slipped down on her nose and her old hands busy with a set of knitting-needles—a real, nice, lively old lady, with the habit of staying up late of nights and taking an interest in the conversation, and awfully fond of telling you complicated stories about the times she minded when she was a girl. I don't want you to think I didn't like her, because I did, first-rate; and I'm going to keep on liking her better and better. She's a dear, motherly old soul. But there are times when a man's interest in the remote past gets kind of swallowed up in the immediate present, so that he can't seem able to keep the connection somehow. That was the trouble with me that night, while I sat on one side of her and Frances on the other, neither one of us saying very much, but giving a respectful murmur, once in a while, to show that we were pretending to listen, and looking at each other across the wide, wide space between.

It was only half-past seven when I got there; but it got to be ten, after a while, and I was growing awfully uneasy and melancholy. Then the dear old lady finished one of her stories, and she let her knitting fall in her lap, with her hands folded on top of it, brooding over some of her tender memories; and then it wasn't more than a minute or two before she was in a fine, deep doze.

I looked at Frances, and Frances looked at me. I didn't dare to move; I didn't dare to speak above my breath. But when a man is talking to a girl who really is willing to hear what he wants to say he doesn't have to scream.

"Frances!" I said, in a soft, mild whisper. "Frances, I love you!"

She flushed a beautiful, warm pink, from her soft, round throat to the tips of her dainty ears, her cheeks dimpling, her sweet eyes looking straight at me. I had to grip myself hard.

"Beloved!" I whispered, struggling to keep the wild joy out of my voice. "Beloved, tell me: Do you love me? Tell me!"

I saw her dear lips move, ever so little. I couldn't hear a sound; but her eyes translated her meaning to me. I got out of my chair and moved on tip-toe to a place behind the sleeper, holding my arms wide.

"Come!" I said, and she came to me.

All right. You go ahead and imagine a long, long blank, and fill it out to suit yourself. I don't care how you fix it; you can't go far wrong if you've any imagination at all.

"But Tommy, how foolish we are!" she said, after a while. "We can't dream of it, not for ever and ever so long—oh, years and years! We're both too young."

"Too young to dream—yes!" I said. "But not too young to see visions. Frances, I love you!"

She gave a low, pleased laugh. "We must wait ever and ever so long before our vision of a home can come true."

"We've got to wait till I get my pay raised, that's a cinch," I told her—something like that. "Dear girl, you're going to marry a poor man—one who will have to work all his life, most likely. But you don't care for that, do you? There's a glory in being young, beloved—foolishly young and foolishly poor. There's all the more time for growing old together and for finding out what the beauty and strength and courage of life and love may be. Frances, I love you!"

And then I heard a quiet sound, and saw a pair of quaint, bright old eyes watching us, and heard a quaint old voice saying:

"Well, bless my soul! Why, my babies! Come here to mother!"

All right; just let it go at that.

And now I've got to tell you about the next time I saw Stocky. Then I'm done with this.

I missed him, those few days. So did everybody around the joint. Billy Strong was all right enough, in his way; but he knew and we knew that he was nothing but a makeshift, a stop-gap. Nobody can amount to much that way, and Billy didn't seem to want to try. What we all wanted

was to have that blessed, ugly old face behind the desk again, and to hear the sound of that painful, shuffling limp and that funny stutter, and to feel that we had to feel responsible again. Why, Billy was as homesick as any of us to have the old boy back. Things slipped along just any old way. Jordan saw it, easy enough, when he came poking out to the city-room; but he didn't seem to have the heart to make a roar. He'd just mope up and down, scowling at us, and then he'd go snorting back to his own room and shut himself in, leaving Billy in the sulks and the rest of us peevish and careless and all out of sorts. We made a pretty bum paper while we were waiting for him to show up.

Then one morning I'd covered my run in a rush, sloughing all but the routine, blowing back to the office before half-past ten; and there sat Stocky in his dust-soiled shirt-sleeves, with his collar off, sprawled out over his desk, sifting through the odds and ends of litter that had stacked up while he was away.

Maybe I wasn't glad! I wanted to cheer, till I had a close look at him, and then I wanted to weep. He'd been having a hard time of it. The strength seemed to have gone out of his big shoulders, leaving them with a nerveless droop; and his big mouth was pinched and drawn, and his cheeks thin, and his patient old eyes shrunk back into deep hollows. He'd been suffering, Stocky had, and I'd helped to bring it on him.

He looked up from his desk when I went in, but he couldn't see who it was, that far off. I didn't know what I was going to say to him, but I marched over and stuck out my hand.

"Why—why—Mr. Stockton!" I got out of me, in a thin gasp.

He took my hand in his big, strong clasp, holding it, doing his best to give me a smile.

"Hello, Bub-Burke!" he said. "How gug-goes it?"

But I didn't want to talk about myself. "Mr. Stockton," I said, "I'm sorry. You've got to believe that."



"Thank you, youngster. Sure I bub-believe it!"

"I wish I had known," I said. "If I had known——"

He had dragged himself up from his chair and was standing close beside me, looking down at me, making me feel as though he were far up on some calm, clear height I'd never climbed to and didn't know anything about.

"It's all right, Bub-Burke," he said, very quietly. "You're a good chap. It bub-broke me up a bit; I kuk-can't say it didn't. Bub-but it's all right. I wouldn't tut-take it back, if I kuk-could. We dud-did the only thing there was to be dud-done; and we'd dud-do it again, in just the same way, if it was pup-pup-put up to us. We'd have to; it's in the gug-game."

He put his great arm across my shoulders, in the way I've learned to love with all my heart, letting me feel all the simple dignity and majesty and strength of him.

"Sus-son," he said, "I bub-believe this: We've gug-got to pup-pup-play the game according to the rules the Almighty has written, and we mum-mustn't be afraid. If we kuk-can do that, there will be no accidents for us, and nothing kuk-can go wrong."

In spite of everything, he said just that, and he meant every word of it.

*We must play the game according to the rules the Almighty has written, and we mustn't be afraid. If we can do that, there will be no accidents for us, and nothing can go wrong!*

Oh, there's a man for you!



## "SO AS BY FIRE"

By Curtis Hidden Page

THERE are two equal loves, each passion-strong,  
And one doth still desire, and one deny.  
Strange war they wage, these twain, their whole life long,  
For either both must live, or both must die.

If love-denial prevail and have his will  
He saves alive his brother, love-desire;  
If love-desire would win, he first must kill,  
Then burn alive upon his brother's pyre.

But though denial be life, desire be death,  
Spendthrift of life, I yield to death-desire.  
I feel the burning of love's indrawn breath,  
And know Fate's will—yet freely choose the fire.

Some single perfect love, burned pure of shame,  
May rise, like Phoenix, deathless, from the flame.

# A JEST OF FATE

By James Hopper

IT was a rather disreputable place, and really we were there by chance, a dance upon the British war-ship anchored near Cavite and the break-down of the returning launch leaving us upon the stone quay of the Binondo *estero* at a shameful hour. The hours spent bobbing upon the waters while, with fervent ejaculations, the engineer experimented with the frivolous gasoline engine, had been ecstatically cool. Now the city exhaled upon us her feverish breath; in a short time the sun would pour down its blistering rays. We could not bear thought of room and bed, and so we sat around the big *narra* table at Timke's, clinking with straws the ice in our glasses.

There was a scuffle in an obscure corner of the room; then, carried by *muchachos*, there passed beneath the light a limp, dangling corpse. They were not over-careful, the *muchachos*. Two were at the legs, two at the arms, so that the head hung down, lamentable, with mouth open. They crossed the room and vanished through a door into the rear apartment; and our last glimpse was of the opalescent reflection of a lamp upon a cranium astonishingly bald.

"Old man Dickson," somebody said, significantly; "paralyzed, as usual."

"That man," said Courtland, with a vague gesture toward the door just slammed, "that man is the victim of a most atrocious and absurd tragedy."

And he told it to us thus:

I first knew him through his newspaper work. Every morning he shuf-

fled gently into my office and asked if there was anything new. He did this with a want of bluff strange in a reporter, and yet not at all with humility; but rather in a dreamy, detached manner, as if he really did not care if there was anything new, and would probably not remember it if there was; as if the thing of importance, after all, were the internal problem upon which he was pondering, pondering with a discreet intensity that left his arms to hang in uncouth limpness, his feet to drag, his head to sink sideways toward his right shoulder, his whole body to appear as abandoned, utterly abandoned of the spiritual being—to hang loose, limp, ungoverned, like a scarecrow which lives, gesticulates, postures only with the caprices of the wind. His whole body, I said; I should except the eyes. They were magnificent eyes, large, limpid, serenely blue. They were not abandoned; they were fixed. But it was not at anything outside. It was at something within. As you sought them you became aware of that. You were not seen—you were not of importance. The sun, the sky, men, women were not seen—they were not of importance. These eyes were looking inside. As you examined them you realized that it was the back of them that was turned toward you, the reflective back wall of them, and that their working, searching, penetrating part was turned inward, poring there in the shifting gloom, at I don't know what vision.

Don't think that I noted all this at first. It came slowly, by degrees. No, the first thing that impressed me

was his baldness, his extraordinary baldness. It seems nothing to tell you that on his head there was not a suspicion of hair; that's common enough, doesn't express it at all. Likewise to explain that there were no brows, that the lashes were gone, that, of course, his whole face was hairless—this is prattle, mere childish prattle. Usual expressions, the ordinarily adequate figures—comparisons with knees, with billiard balls—sink into impotence, are sacrilege before the awfulness of the thing. Nothing usual can express it. It was something appalling. It was a curse, a Visitation. It was as if God's lightning had struck his pate, blasted it clean—no, that does not express it. There was something solid, established, immutable about the thing that cannot be explained by visions of accidents, of cataclysms, however potent. It savored rather of some Law of Nature, of the patient, irrevocable work of obscure Forces through the ages—say like the glacier-polishing of granite domes such as I've seen in the Californian Sierra, something geologic and eternal. Yes, that was it: That man's pate must have been polished and repolished with malevolent earnestness for years, for ages, through inconceivable eons. His father, his grandfather, his ancestors, after and before the deluge, from the first day of creation, nay, back into the reign of chaos, must have been bald, abominably bald, to explain that mournful head before me. As a matter of fact, I should have been surprised at something else; for at the sight of a volume lying open upon my desk, he had launched upon a dissertation on Keats, something absolutely precious in quaint insight, in subtlety of appreciation. But I was fascinated with the head; that baldness held me in its toil, froze my eyes, tugged my heart, drugged my brains. And it was not till he had gone that I realized I had been listening to exquisite discourse.

Do not be too much surprised. Such a thing is to be accepted, almost expected from a Manila newspaper man. The Manila newspaper man is

a singular genus. Always he has talent; sometimes more than that. But, of course, there's always something the matter. That something is that which makes him so interesting. And it leads, also, to a certain conventionality in intercourse with him. For instance, to a Manila newspaper man you never mention the Past. There is no past. He is supposed to have sprung like Venus from the sea, full-panoplied—with his education, his talent, his gentle skepticism—right on the Escolta. That's the rule.

I knew the rule; so if I broke it, it shows merely that my awakened curiosity was too much for my *savoir-faire*. I wanted to know, that's all. I searched and found his haunt.

Every evening, after his work, he crossed over to the Métropole. He had a queer, apologetic way of progressing, with his right side ahead of his left, as if ceaselessly jostled by an imaginary crowd. Gently, with that sideways motion, he shuffled into the big room and made for a table in the corner of the veranda. He was always very cleanly dressed in white, unstarched—which, I suspected, was the result of his own industry in his little back room; but his shoes were down by the heels, which added greatly to the general humility of his appearance. Carefully he placed his chair at a certain distance, known of him only, from the table; then he sat down slowly, folded his arms upon the table, his body inclined a little forward. Without a movement of the folded arms he raised one finger of the right hand, in a gesture almost heraldic in its sobriety—and the boy, attentive by his side, immediately brought him a small glass of cloudy green stuff. This he sipped slowly. A gray, opalescent cloud came over his eyes; his head fell slightly toward his right shoulder in an attitude of careful consideration. When he had finished he remained thus a long time, immovable, petrified in his gentle brooding; then up would go his finger in that strange gesture, almost imperceptible, but infinitely commanding, as if it came not from

himself, but as a manifestation of some superior power, some invisible but overshadowing Fate of irrevocable Design—and the boy, attentive, immediately brought another glass of the cloudy green stuff, which he sipped to the dregs, motionless and fatal, like some hierarchic figure. Two hours, three hours, he kept this up, then suddenly he moved. Both his arms went up and around in a wide, noble gesture; his hands—long, fine, veined hands—settled upon his head, his absurd bald head, as if in protection, in vague protest of possible levity; he leaned forward and was asleep.

He slept there, upon the table, his hands upon his head, his cheek upon his arms; his face, turned to the light, was relaxed in infinite lassitude, as a child's after crying; his mouth, slightly open, let pass his breathing, faint like a babe's—and once in a while he sighed, a sigh not deep, not peevish, not rebellious, but resigned, rather, patient and unhappy. There was something incredibly babyish about the whole thing—the sleep, the sigh, the posture, even that extraordinary bald head gleaming between the fingers, pudgy with shadow—something that would have drawn the heart of woman in tenderness, tugged at it with the pang-desire to console, to cherish, to kiss. Yes, a woman would have kissed that absurd bald head, would have smothered that gentle sigh. A woman would have, I tell you! And he didn't know, didn't know, the fool baby-man!

After a time I began to sit at his table. He accepted me without emotion. Life to him, evidently, was full of such facts as my presence there, facts to which one must adapt one's self with the least possible fuss. He seemed, in fact, in perpetual process of readjustment. He'd sit there quietly, sipping his green poison, till diabolically I'd mention some name of literary fame. It was like pressing a button, the effect was so instantaneously sure. First would come a few detached sentences, like a modulation. Then, insensibly, he had slid into the main theme, and it was—what shall I call

it?—exquisite; there's no other word for it. There was such depth to the thing, such subtlety of dissection, such a wealth of sudden, baring illuminations—and all that cloaked, softened in a haze of gentle skepticism that left nothing of dogmatic asperities. I compared it with the snorting, imperial utterance of my German professor at college. It was French, that's what it was, in its breadth, its charity, its continual attenuation and inter-correction, its horror of the dictatorial, the pedantic. But don't think that he animated himself in this. No, he kept his immovable—I came near saying "silent," and really even while he spoke he gave an impression of silence—his immovable, detached calm. All this, it came as from another man. It was another man, the past man. He was not creating now; he was merely re-reading the creations of the past man, objectively, too, with a certain mild astonishment at the performance.

"You must have studied deeply," I said one night, as I sat, still dazzled, long after he had spoken his last word.

He looked at me hazily. "I have my Harvard Ph.D.," he said absent-mindedly. "I lectured afterward."

"Then for God's sake," I blurted out, tortured by the vision of that life calmly ruining itself; "for God's sake, what are you doing here!"

His eyes turned absolutely inside out. From their interior contemplation they flashed outward. He was looking at me; for the first time I had that feeling completely—that he was looking at me, a hard, profound, startled stare.

Then, before I could make a movement, a gesture of protest, he had risen to his feet. "Good night," he said brusquely, and he had shuffled out of the room.

For three days he did not appear. I had hurt him, insulted him. I waited for him, with a desire for reparation. Yet when he finally came I saw that I was mistaken. There was no resentment, absolutely none, in his manner, as he shuffled up to the table

and sat down. But before even the usual green poison had been set before him, he had drawn from his breast pocket a square piece of card-board and had thrown it to me.

I looked at it stupidly, at first without comprehension. Then the whole thing flashed upon me in an understanding so sudden, so complete, so profound that it simply dazed me, left me there inert between two extraordinary and conflicting desires, to laugh and weep—laugh extravagantly, madly; weep, with the same abandon, thoroughly, humidly, sentimentally.

It was an answer to my question. And it was a picture. A picture of himself—I recognized the fine, white forehead, the sensitive mouth, the wide, pure eyes. But on the cranium there was hair, hair, do you hear? Not a little of it, not a mere trifle, but hair, an abundance of it, a magnificent, leonine mane, a wealth of it, waving and rolling, curling over the ears, setting off the whole person in distinction. There was hair on his head; there were brows over his eyes, dark brows that must have been contrasted finely with the wide blue orbs. There it was, the answer. He had had hair; he was bald. This was the whole of his ridiculous tragedy. He had had hair, do you understand?—and now he had none.

There I had it, complete; but he evidently did not think so. Or rather he didn't bother about me at all. A powerful impulse to unburden himself possessed him now; all the accumulated wonder and pain at Fate's wanton outrage poured out of him, hurling away like so much chaff the rigid dam of restraint held against it so long. He talked now, at first in broken phrases, then more freely as he went on, in a smooth current, hopeless, fatalistic, but tinged with a strange self-compassion. And yet there was the old detachment. He seemed analyzing someone else, telling the pitiful adventure of some other man, as if he could not believe it had occurred to himself, as if his credulity did not suffice before the wonder and cruelty

of the thing. A mild astonishment pervaded him.

It had begun with a little gray spot on the crown, a very little spot. That was several years ago. He counted, and I was astonished: he must be young yet. He didn't pay much attention to it. He was happy then, he explained, and it took much to bother him. He had just accepted a post in the English Department of a Western university. It was a lovely place, by the sea. There were hills behind, all velvety gray and gold. His house was covered with climbing roses, absolutely covered, embowered in them like a nest. His associations were pleasant; he loved his work. His lectures were attracting some attention. It was lovely. He was happy. And then there was——

He stopped and was silent quite a while; his eyes, hazy with retrospection, took on tones of marvelous softness. And when he began again I had the impression that he had left out something.

Well, after a while that little patch of gray hair began falling out, and finally it was a neat round tonsure on the top of the head. Then, down by his right ear, another spot began to gray. He watched it with some concern. After a while, just as before, the gray hair fell out, and he had two little bald places. It began to make some difference, really. The first little tonsure was at least symmetrical, could be called interesting. But that incongruous spot above his right ear—no words could soften that. It was strange, singular.

People thought it so; at least, he imagined that they did. Sometimes a co-ed in his class would break out in a sudden giggle. That hurt his work. He studied much over his lectures; but, as to the form, he was wont to extemporize a great deal. And one can't extemporize while a co-ed giggles. Besides, he was in the grasp of a perverse doom. A third gray spot had appeared, above the neck. He knew that three bald spots would be clear ridicule. He began to haunt barber-shops; oils,

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restorers, all sorts of extravagant sham-poops did no good. Soon three bald spots shone white, like famine in the remaining luxuriance of his hair.

There was no mistaking it now. At first, at the Faculty Club, they had slapped him on the back and joked. Now they were discreetly and ominously silent. The very word hair, when dropped by some giddy confrère, fell into something like a vacuum of somber consternation. In the lecture-room he often lost the thread of his thought, remained long pained minutes in speechless befuddlement. It was becoming intolerable.

Then came the disaster. In the blindness of his desperation he was induced by a magazine advertisement to try some new and wondrous hair-remedy. The result was fatal. The stuff turned in spots the color of his hair from brown to rusty red. In spots, mind you; so that now he was piebald—red, brown, gray and white. The morning that, before a glass, he faced the hideous fact, he nearly cut his throat. And he was never able to get his lecture. He tried three times; three times he stalked firmly along the walk, his hat pulled deep about his shame; he circled the hall a dozen times. He could not enter, simply could not.

Happily, it was near the Summer vacation, and he had no trouble obtaining leave for the rest of the term. He fled the college town. He wandered through the big city near-by, aimless, lone, tortured. A good deal of his time was spent upon the water-front. It's always windy there, and men pull their hats down about their ears. Ships began to exercise on him a strange fascination. He dreamed of islands, desert islands, lonely, unpeopled islands. One day, hardly aware of it, he walked the plank of a little brigantine—the *Tropic Bird*, some such name—and begged the captain to take him. The captain did, as a green hand. They sailed off.

He was still full of gratitude toward that captain. It seemed that he never could get used to seamen's work. "I

couldn't climb spars," he explained; "I'd get dizzy. I tried and tried; I couldn't." The captain made a cabin-boy of him. Hence his eternal gratitude. "He was a gentleman, a thorough gentleman with all his roughness. When he saw that I couldn't climb spars he made me a cabin-boy. I swabbed the floor, waited at meals, washed dishes and helped the cook. That captain, sir, was a gentleman!"

Really, he was absolutely broken. The insidious disease was continuing its damnable work. From Honolulu they picked up a charter for the Philippines. When they arrived in Manila he was absolutely bald, bald as I saw him now. "No hair, no brows, no lashes; bald, ludicrous, ignoble, unclean!" He raised one finger; the boy ran to him; he sipped the green liquor.

But he did not stop there. He began it again, the lamentable tale, with new details, with inexorable precision. He was a long time on a description of his departed hair. A wealth of adjectives, subtle and splendid, came to his lips without effort. He found new, caressing words, as a mother speaking of her dead babe. And one got no impression of vanity from it, either. It was something past now, extraneous, so irrevocably detached from him that he could speak of it without egotism. He dwelt again upon his happiness—the Western college, the silvery hills, the rose-covered cottage. "And then there was——"

Again he stopped, and again when he resumed I had the impression of something vital left out. It was this, I think, that kept me at it; for every night, now, I heard it, the odious story, with an augmentation of details, a progressive firmness of construction. He'd begin with his gray spot and run the whole gamut of his piteous degradation. I grew infinitely weary of it, but there was the secret, the secret still held from me. It was exasperation at this continuous evasion, I think, coupled with invincible lassitude at the old tale, that led me, one night, madly to exclaim:

"Yes, yes, Dickson; but the girl, the girl; tell me about the girl now!"



By his sudden start, by his affrighted stare, I knew that I had hit it, absolutely hit it. Oh, no, I don't take much credit for that. "*Cherchez la femme*," divested of the cynicism placed upon it by its makers, this precept is fundamental in the game of human analysis.

There was a She—yes, there was. A young girl (he's far from old himself, remember, in spite of his pate); an angel. He loved her; she loved him. She had a precious gift of imagination. He had hoped, under his critical guidance, to see it bloom into something—a talent, a genius perhaps. But now—

"Man, man!" I almost screamed; "you fool, you imbecile; why don't you go back, go back to her! What the deuce is it, this more or less vegetation upon your head, when you have that, that of all things precious, when you have love, love, man!"

I was furious with him. I talked in the same vein, very extravagantly, no doubt. I gesticulated; I shouted. He listened quietly, a considering frown over his browless eyes.

No, it could not be; it could not be. I didn't understand, couldn't understand. He had left when it began. I couldn't understand. He used to walk with her in the evening. He was working hard those days; at night he'd be tired. They'd stroll gently up a canyon (Co-ed Canyon, I think he called it). They'd sit in the grass. He'd rest his head on her shoulder. Then she'd stroke that tired head, run her light fingers through his—

"Man, man," he shouted; "imagine that, now! Imagine me there once more, and she, with that familiar gesture, that sacred gesture, running her fingers—"

Slowly he passed his hands over the atrocious smoothness of his cranium in a long, shuddering movement. "Imagine that," he said once more, in a broken whisper.

He raised his finger. He sipped. I gave up. Really, you know, the way he told it, it was rather convincing. I left him to his self-abasement. He lived on his harmless life: by day the uncongenial task; the maudlin dissi-

pation by night. And every evening he told me his story, his lugubrious story, till at times a whiff of his madness communicated itself to me, entered my blood, and, taking up my own particular wrongs, I descended with him into orgies of tremulous self-compassion.

Then occurred something which gave me a ray of hope.

It was at a fire. Cholera had broken out in the city and the health officials, with that brisk cruelty in which revels man, from medieval inquisitor to common policeman, when persuaded of the righteousness of his cause, were *cleaning out* barrios. This particular barrio was a miserable assemblage of nipa huts in the Paco district. It was burning well when I arrived, in one large, clear flame that rose with a single powerful twist toward a sky purple with sunset. It was a fine spectacle. Society had deserted the Luneta Drive for the more flaring show; out on the rosy edge of the conflagration was an intricacy of victorias and calesins, a stamping of pony-hoofs. Husis shimmered; white suits gleamed; beneath the crackling of tortured nipa rose a low hum of polite conversation, musical laughter, melodious Oh's and Ah's at particularly brilliant pyrotechnics. All Society was there, reclining upon cushioned seats with a fine feeling of security before this proof of official energy. But in the shadow on the other side I could vaguely descry other spectators, unkempt men and women standing up, stiff and motionless, with little bundles in their hands, on their heads, stupid before this magnificent destruction of their homes. Probably it had never occurred to them that these huts, these hearths, held such possibilities of splendor. The revelation paralyzed them. They gazed with wide-open eyes, with open mouths, silent, dark, immovable.

Then suddenly, in the peace, the security of the moment, there rose a shrill, mad cry, right from the flames. The buzz of conversation halted brusquely. White handkerchiefs rose

convulsively to whitening lips. The firemen, off on one side, began an inexplicable running to and fro. The nipa roared. And right from the flame, in maddening continuance, as if from a soul bodiless and in torture, came the high, shrill, quavering cry.

Ladies began to faint in their vicinities; officers bent over them in impotent solicitude, their faces as white as the women's. Other men sprang from their carriages with extraordinary resolution, ran forward and stopped short before the heat. A Met. policeman, huge and gaunt, skipped up and down in some sort of monstrous dance, wringing his hands in plain view. But on the other side the somber spectators remained banked in immobility. Only, their eyes opened wider and their pupils gleamed.

Then I saw Dickson. He was walking toward the furnace, his right shoulder pushed forward, his body flattened apologetically, begging passage through an imaginary throng. He entered the circle of light; a whiff of hot air sent his hat off, and his head, his monstrous bald head, shone a moment in rosy hues. I shouted. He kept straight on, humble, mournful. A roar of warning, of astonishment, came from the crowd. He kept on, his head pensively drooped sideways. He disappeared into the fire. Shrieks, yells, a terrific tumult came from the carriages. And still, as if borne up in the flame, springing with one single, powerful twist to the purple sky, there ran the long, shrill, continuous cry. It rose louder, more piercing, till it vibrated in our marrow in intolerable pain. And then we became aware that it was nearer—it was among us. A muffled, dripping, inchoate figure was stumbling into the outer circle of light. I sprang forward; I tore off the dripping mantle, and there was Dickson, his head drooped sideways, pensively considering a little girl in his arms, a little Malay girl, half-naked, who screamed still, too dazed with the horror to know that it was past.

Really, he started to protest right away; it was quite easy. And he

made it almost so with his calm explanation. The huts were built on poles, so that the fire was rather high, and close to the ground it was not so hot—rather cool he would have us believe. Then the barrio was laid out with a plaza in the centre, and it was there that, crouching on the ground, the little girl had been, still unhurt. He had noticed, before going in, a pile of old blankets lying in the dirt, and a barrel of water, the barrio's old supply, near-by. By soaking the blankets, muffling them about him and keeping low, he had been able to get in and out without much discomfort—he coughed—a little smoke, that's all, a few superficial burns. He staggered.

Many willing hands there were to claim the little girl, who was sobbing gently now. We started toward my carriage. A thunder of clapping hands, a roar of acclaim announced his first step, and then his calm deserted him. "My hat, my hat!" he shouted; "where's my hat? Give it to me quick!" He trembled with excitement. He began to swear. "My hat, who's got my hat?" he shrieked, absolutely unstrung. I gave him mine. He crushed it down to his ears. We slunk off to the carriage, and I drove off with my Hero cowering and darting haunted side-looks.

As we passed the Parian gate he said: "Come on; let's go to the Métropole."

"No, you don't," I said briskly. "You're going straight to your room. You're going to sit down, with a box of cigars at your elbow. You're going to think, sit up all night and think. I'll give you the theme. Imagine Her at that fire, a while ago. Imagine her impression, and weigh that against the puerility of hair."

"Good Lord, Courtland, what a sentimentalist you are!" he exclaimed. "What a sentimentalist!" he repeated a while later, musingly.

But he did not get off at the Métropole, and I left him at the door of his house. He was not at the Métropole the next day, nor the next, nor the next. A week later I heard that he

had left the *Post* for a new paper, under much more pleasant management, and that he held a desk position. I did not follow the evolution closely, for I was busy those days. We had been wrestling long with the monetary problem, and now the United States Government was sending us an Expert, an Authority, a Professor Jenkinson, who was to settle the whole thing for us as by legerdmain. We were preparing data for him and were infernally busy. But what I did see of Dickson was rather encouraging. The little red veins were disappearing from his cheeks; a certain twitch of the right corner of his mouth was relaxing; an indefinable briskness was pervading his whole being, the manner of the man who works hard and likes his work.

Finally the Big Man came. There was a tremor of expectation in official and social circles—official, for obvious reasons; in social, because of the charming fact that the professor came to Manila with a bride, romantically wooed and won in California, in passing, as it were. A reception was announced at the Malicañan.

I went. I was late. The place was ablaze with lights as I drove up, and polite conversation hummed out of the windows like honey-laden bees. I did not leave my carriage right away, my curiosity being aroused by the suspicious behavior of a man.

He was dodging among the shadows like a malefactor, first behind one veranda post, then behind another. Then he stood a while at the bottom of the steps, buttoning up his white jacket with an air of great resolution, and mounted. He got up four steps, then, suddenly turning, pell-melled down again in ridiculous funk. More sneaking in the massed gloom beneath the veranda; then again he stood at the bottom of the steps, pulling down his jacket in immense resolution. Up half-a-dozen steps, and again the helter-skelter retreat. But this time I had followed, and he ran plumb into my arms.

It was Dickson, and his face in the light showed shockingly haggard. I

don't think he knew me at first. But when he did he gripped my arm convulsively and ran me into the shadow.

"What the devil—?" I began, exasperated.

"It is she," he said; "she—my God!"

"She?" I repeated stupidly; "who is she?"

"Mrs. Jenkinson," he gasped. "Good God, Courtland, can't you understand! The girl, the girl, you know—she's up there"—he pointed upward to the light—"she's up there; she's Mrs. Jenkinson!"

I was incredibly affected. A great disillusion, an immense discouragement weighed upon me. I discovered that I had dreamed, that I had hoped, that I had taken an enormous interest in that idiotic man there, with his absurd moral problem. And this thing, this sudden finale staggered me, seemed wanton and cruel as the torturing of a little child. I was speechless.

After a while he said, very calmly, very firmly: "Courtland, I want to see her once more. No, there won't be any scene. I won't come near; I won't be seen. But I must see her once more. Take me up there."

I seized his arm and we climbed the stairs. We came to the threshold of the big reception-room. I stood there a moment, dazed by the light, the play of color. Then I made her out in the centre. He had been quicker than I, for I had felt his fingers sink convulsively into my arm.

She was standing within a circle of bowing, smiling men—a gracious, slender, girlish figure with magnificent dark eyes. She was evidently a little bored—not bored: lonely. Unconsciously her eyes wandered from the curveting bipeds in front, in search of something, some warmer, more intimate sympathy, toward a knot of black-garbed men conversing seriously in a corner—the official group, I decided right away. Perhaps one of these appealing glances reached it, for it broke; a tall figure stalked across the room to her. It was the Big Man—you could tell it from the sudden illumination of her whole being. She

looked up, girlish, admiring. He looked down, protectingly. I heard Dickson panting behind me.

A horrid, racking feeling took possession of me, a mad, monstrous desire to laugh, laugh insanely, in maniac shrieks, to shout and slap my thighs, stamp my feet, scream, scandalize—

The professor, standing beneath the centre candelabra, bent his head paternally over his young wife. It glistened to the light. And it was bald, absolutely, irremediably bald.

The *muchacho* in a corner of the room turned something with a sharp click. The lights went out, and the

gray pallor of dawn floated in slowly by door and window. Courtland rose, walked to the rear door, opened it. We followed.

He was asleep upon the table. He slept there, his hands upon his head, his right cheek upon his arm. In the wan light his features showed relaxed, in infinite lassitude, as those of a child after crying; his mouth, a little open, let pass his breathing, equal and faint like a babe's—and once in a while he sighed, a sigh not deep, not peevish, not rebellious, but resigned, rather, patient, gently unhappy.

We left him there. It was the end; it was Fate.



## IN THE DAWN-CHAMBER

By Elsa Barker

**D**EAR, you have spoiled all other men for me,  
And made them alien to my happiness.  
You have discovered an unknown recess  
In Love's great house of ancient masonry.  
There from the window's wide expectancy  
We watch the dawn's rose-dimpled hands caress  
The shadowed hills—Dawn, the high prophetess,  
Who calls the rolling world continually.

The other rooms in Love's house are confined  
To views of the valley, and the walls adorning  
Are mottoes of uncertainty and warning—  
The thousand reservations of the mind.  
'Tis only in this chamber that I find  
The outlook on the hills and on the morning.



## DEFINITIONS OF THE DAY

**A SECRET**—Something worth telling.  
**A CLOSE FRIEND**—One who won't lend money.  
**HEATHEN**—People who don't quarrel over religion.  
**ECCENTRICITIES**—The bad manners of the very rich.

W. J. PRICE

# THREE NICE GIRLS AND MRS. JONES

By W. H. G. Wyndham Martyn

THE idea of attending the ball was not one which appealed to me very strongly, because I know so well my aunt's taste in girls.

She thinks that the plainer a girl is, the better wife she will make me; and it is her mission in life to provide me with what she calls a "nice-minded woman." Now, I am not by any means a bigoted man, and have a very sincere regard for many of the nice-minded maidens my aunt gathers about her. I think they would all make excellent wives for earnest and over-worked ministers, but I cannot regard them with approval from a matrimonial point of view.

Allowing that our divorce laws put those of all other nations to shame by their exquisite adaptability for the settlement of marital dissonances, and admitting that they provide funds of amusement for onlookers, I am averse to hasty changes; and when I marry, I want a woman who will neither divorce nor expect to be divorced. I am perfectly certain that I could not pass a year with the girls my aunt has chosen.

I have always imagined myself to be a bachelor by instinct; and the idea of marrying would never have occurred to me but for my aunt's attitude. She refused to pay any more bills unless I took someone to wife. She has, in sporting parlance, the whip-hand over me—for I have never had the opportunity to work—and she knows it.

I have always been handicapped by my relatives, who never lost an opportunity of asserting that I was too great a fool to earn my bread and butter. This merely proves that they were

biased, and explains that I was never given a chance.

My late lamented father had such a habit of hurling his many virtues at my head, that I made a vow never to become the hard-working, excellent man he claimed to be. I knew there was enough sorrow in the world without that. When he died, I was staggered at the unexpectedly large number of men who attended the funeral. I asked one man who came from Maine, what made him do so. "My dear young man," he told me, "I would have come further than that to see him buried."

You see exactly what kind of man my father was.

Awed by his example, I drifted into an idle life by accident and clung to it by design. I had all the money I needed, and was beloved in Newport, welcomed in Lenox, and Lakewood was delighted to see me. All that life had to offer was mine until my strong-minded relative desired to sound my marriage bells.

I have brothers—kind-hearted, amiable, commercial-minded beings, who eat quick lunches and disport themselves in other commonplace ways. They are disposed to envy me because my aunt threatened to leave me her five millions. But I bore them no ill-will, and even forgot their existence until I was awakened in a disagreeable fashion.

There was an ancient crony of my aunt's who persisted in regarding me as a hero because I had accidentally rescued her Blenheim spaniel from a watery sepulchre. As a matter of fact, I plunged into Lake Champlain think-

ing that the auburn hair belonged to the head of the girl I loved. This old lady assured me that unless I consented to marry a woman my aunt approved, my three blameless brothers would be made heirs to the five millions. I was shocked at the news and asked Fate why I should have to marry. The world has need of sweet-natured old bachelors. I knew this from a perusal of the woman's columns in the evening papers. I learned, too, from the same source, that very often bachelors remain so out of affection for the memory of dead women. I tried this on my aunt on Sunday evening. I played a curiously ugly hymn tune which never fails to bring her into a yielding frame of mind. At such times she feels that the world is very beautiful, but oh, how sad!

"I wish," I murmured softly, "that you did not want me to marry."

"Ah, my dear boy," she said kindly, "if we could only choose our own lot!"

"Why can't we?" I suggested, still playing the hymn.

"We do not live for ourselves," she asserted, a look of lofty purpose lighting up her fine eyes.

"True," I admitted. "But don't you think that a man owes something to himself?"

"Surely," she said, "but what has that to do with your marriage?"

"I will not conceal it from you," I cried. "I once loved a woman."

"Time heals all," she answered with an air of sympathy. "Who was it?"

I raised a hand in expostulation. "Don't ask me," I said. "There are some things in a man's life which should be kept sacred."

I tried to think of some verses of Tennyson's about the tender grace of a day that is dead, or words to that effect, but they eluded me.

I will admit that my aunt was sympathetic.

"At these moments," she remarked, "we feel how we have wasted our opportunities."

"You don't understand," I said. "She—she—is dead."

"My poor boy," cried the old lady,

"I understand perfectly. Now, if you married a nice-minded girl, you would forget all about it."

"I am pained," I returned with some dignity, "to think you have such a low opinion of my constancy."

I sauntered off for a smoke, but my aunt had defeated me.

I knew as I walked into the ball-room on the night of the dance, that I was on the shortest of probations, and railed at the Providence which has given so many superior mental qualities to homely women and withheld them from their favored sisters.

There were a great number of guests, most of whom I knew, and among them were my aunt's girl friends. There was Eva, who had vague ideas about being a medical missionary. Dear Eva! I liked her well enough and sought in vain to assure her that no cannibal would think of eating her if she attained to her desires and worked among the races who possess such unique taste in dress and diet. But somehow she would never believe me.

Joan was there, too. Joan would have it that I was possessed of a great many good qualities, temporarily obscured, which, however, needed only some mental grief or shock to bring out. I often felt tempted to tell my aunt, who retailed this frequently, that if such were the case, my marriage to Joan would end in complete reform.

Elitha was my aunt's favorite and possessed a genius for singing the old songs which were happily forgotten by other people. Oddly enough, Eva had a sister who was charming; so had Joan, and so had Elitha. But alas! they were too worldly-minded for my aunt, and unsuitable for the reformation of her nephew.

I had proposed to them all, and it might have been that they were, as my relative suggested, worldly-minded, but they all refused me. They knew that when poverty comes in at the door love flies out of the window, and they all feared to fall. They were kind enough, though, to warn me of their sisters. As in duty bound I took three



dances from each girl and thereby gained the approval of my aunt.

Eva, Joan and Elitha are nice, kind girls. But niceness and kindness are not enough to make one wish a waltz to be prolonged indefinitely, and none of them dances well. Eva is too tall, Joan is too short and Elitha always treads on my toes.

Just before the supper dance I noticed a very beautiful woman who was a stranger to me. She was so beautiful and charming that I got out of step and turned pale.

Eva regarded me with anxiety. "I am afraid you are ill," she hazarded.

If I had been dancing with either of the others, I should have been glad of such an excuse. But I knew Eva too well to admit it. She is the kind of person who prescribes nauseous medicine, and then stands by to see that one takes it.

"No," I said, "I am not ill. My psychic senses are disturbed."

"That," said Eva, with becoming gravity, "is very sad."

When the dance was over I hurried to a man I knew.

"Who is that woman?" I said, pointing to her; "that woman with the chestnut hair?"

"Don't know," he answered. "I'm going to try for a dance with her. I heard her say she had only one left."

"Billy," I said, kindly but firmly, "I have known you ever since you were a small and singularly ugly boy, and I ask you solemnly, ought you do it?"

Billy has not an extensive vocabulary. "Come off!" was all he said.

"Your fiancée," I continued, "expects you to pay her every attention. You ought to find it a pleasure, and now you are conspiring to secure the only dance remaining to the prettiest woman in the room. Billy," I remarked with sorrow as I manoeuvred to stand before him and thus cut off his approach to the lady we both admired, "you have much to learn."

He must have agreed with me as he saw me bowing to her.

"This," I said, with an air of perfect innocence, "this is our waltz."

I took her programme and very deftly marked my initial against the next dance; I do that sort of thing rather well, and she did not notice it.

"I'm afraid," she answered in a lazy but indefinably attractive manner, "that you've made some mistake."

"It is possible," I returned gravely, "that it may be the next dance and not the present one, but I'll swear it is not the last."

Her brows contracted with a slight frown as she glanced at my initial "G."

"I fancied," she said, "that I had not intended to dance this."

"Such mistakes are frequent at dances," I assured her.

The overtime that wretched orchestra had wasted on my dances with Eva, Joan, and Elitha was recovered by the assured brevity of the waltz with the lady of the chestnut hair.

Then came the supper. We were sitting in an alcove when I heard my aunt's deep voice from the other side of a screen. She was talking to Joan.

"He isn't here," said the short-sighted Joan. "We were to have danced the last waltz together."

"He is not well," returned the other. "Eva tells me his psychic senses are disturbed."

My partner listened to this with amusement and turned a questioning look on me.

"Man," said I, with an oracular air, "is seldom to be trusted."

"Ah!" she sighed, "I have learned that, too."

"What!" I cried. "Has any man ever missed his dance with you?"

"There are more important things than a Strauss waltz," she said.

"I can't believe it," I replied instantly. "The next waltz is the most important thing in the world to me."

She laughed a delicious little laugh.

"Does it hurt much when the psychic senses are disturbed?"

I pride myself on my calm; for although I was startled, the liqueur glass did not lose a drop of the green chartreuse.

"It's a question of proximity," I returned.

"Proximity?" she blithely queried.  
 "Whose?"

"Yours," I answered boldly.

She looked at my scrawling initial.

"Mr. G.," she said softly, "is it nice of you to have deserted those three dear girls?"

"I can't think who told you!" I cried.

But she made as though to rise, for another dance had begun.

"Don't be so hasty," I pleaded.  
 "Have you no pride?"

She looked at me rather haughtily.  
 "What do you mean?"

I took her programme and pointed to it.

"Simply this," I said. "I crossed out the initials of some man named Jones. If he were worthy to dance with you he would have sought you out, and slaughtered me at his leisure."

She smiled curiously. "There will be plenty of time for that." Then she cast her eyes down and said in a lower voice, "Do you think it kind to tell me I am so old and faded that men won't take the trouble to find me?"

I experienced a wobbly sensation in my heart and my psychic disturbances became cataclysmic in their strength.

"You know I did not mean that," I said. "What else could I mean but that any man worthy the name would think you anything but beautiful? But who is Jones?"

"I am," she said, with a smile. "I did not want to dance, so put that name to prevent other people filling my programme. I did not expect to find such obtrusive persons as Mr. G."

"How delightful!" I cried, crossing out the fictitious Jones who figured largely on the card. "Our steps suit perfectly."

"But remember—" she commenced.

"What's the use?" I said gaily.

"Have you forgotten your aunt?" she asked more gravely.

"Of course not," I said. "If she objects to my dancing with you, I shall cut her off with my blessing, and no more."

"Will that be wise?"

"The things one wants to do never are," I told her.

"Then why do you do it?"

"Isn't that what the lawyers call a leading question?" I returned.

"Perhaps it is wiser not to answer," she said.

"Oh, but I will!" I cried. "You seem to know all about my affairs, and I will not marry these damsels."

"It would be illegal," she answered.  
 "Polygamy is bad form."

"It isn't that," I returned. "It is because I realize that marriage is a serious thing and a man must choose for himself."

She nodded approvingly. "Have you ever done any work?"

"I shall begin tomorrow," I assured her.

"Can you do anything in particular?"

"I never tried," I said, with an air of modesty.

She shook her head. "It would be risky. Competition is so strong, you know. Take my advice and don't break your aunt's heart."

"Would you have me break my own?" I demanded.

She laughed. "How sentimental you are! At thirty one should have outgrown it."

"I have saved all mine till now," I said.

"That's not economy," she retorted, "that's miserliness. Think of those three dear girls and what they have missed!"

"Please leave them alone," I said.  
 "I don't want even to think of them. How can I when you are near?"

"Aren't you a trifle extravagant in your expressions?" she asked.

I might have become even more so had not my aunt come upon us. To my intense astonishment she kissed the chestnut-haired lady. It was the kind of kiss she bestowed on Eva, Joan and Elitha!

"Now for a quiet talk," she said. "I want to hear all the news." Then she turned on me.

"Are you better?" she asked.

"Worse," I answered. Then, as-

suming an air of lightness, I cried,  
"Never mind! On with the dance!"

"My nephew is not over-strong,"  
said my aunt kindly. "He reminds me  
in that of poor Mr. Jones, who was such  
a true friend to me."

"Dear aunt," I said, striving to  
appear calm, for until that moment I  
had not considered a real Mr. Jones,  
"confusion of tenses is one of your  
greatest charms; but you spoke of Mr.  
Jones." I lowered my voice. "Is he  
no longer with us?"

"He died just three years ago."

I rose to my feet and addressed the  
young widow.

"I will leave you to talk over the old  
days with my aunt, but don't forget  
that the next waltz is mine."

"Is it?" said the lady innocently.  
"I thought——"

I grasped the programme firmly and  
pointed out a prominent "G."

"I suppose it is," she admitted.

My aunt smiled at me approvingly  
as I left her tête-à-tête with Mrs. Jones.



## A CITY MOOD

By Arthur Stringer

**I** F I once more might only wander free  
From all this citted laughter touched with pain,  
And learn with quiet hill and patient tree  
To watch the wheeling seasons and the rain,  
And with the lyric grass, the widening sea,  
Retaste the wine of Earth's Aprilian strain  
And her cool wisdom earn, and at the knee  
Of brooding calm some wider knowledge drain—  
Then I that deeper Self entombed in me  
This many a Spring might hear no more complain—  
Then I that better life that used to be,  
When hope and dreams were young, might know again!



## ALL GONE

**T**ED—Money always seems to go somewhere or other. However you stint  
yourself, the result is about the same in the long run.

**N**ED—That's so. The fellow who never bet on a horse-race has probably  
been paying in his money for years to a life insurance company.

# THE OPEN DOOR

By May Harris

## CHARACTERS

GILBERT NORTH (*he has been for a year a helpless cripple*).

MRS. NORTH (*his wife*).

DR. AINSWORTH (*the physician who is treating his case*).

MARTIN (*NORTH's servant*).

**S**CENE—*Veranda of the Norths' cottage. Twilight. MRS. NORTH seated near NORTH, who is lying in an invalid's chair.*

NORTH

These insects—what do you call them?—seem to be doing all the talking.

MRS. NORTH

Katydid. They're boring each other dreadfully.

NORTH

I thought they were disputing.

MRS. NORTH

It's the same thing.

NORTH

Is that the way to dispute—to keep up one's side all the time?

MRS. NORTH (*listlessly*)

It's one sort of way.

NORTH

There's another, is there?

MRS. NORTH

Not saying anything.

NORTH *laughs*.

MRS. NORTH

You're feeling bored tonight?

NORTH

On the contrary, I've been thinking.

MRS. NORTH (*looking out into the twilight*)

Have you?

NORTH (*after a pause*)

Do you ever—think?

MRS. NORTH (*sarcastically*)

I think I might manage to—if you wish it.

60

NORTH

Well—I wish it!

MRS. NORTH

Well?

NORTH

About me!

MRS. NORTH *looks at him silently.*

NORTH

I'm very happy!

MRS. NORTH

I'm—glad—

NORTH

Are you sure?

MRS. NORTH

That I'm glad?

NORTH

That I speak the truth?

MRS. NORTH (*slowly*)

Why shouldn't you—?

NORTH

Because it might distress you if I—

MRS. NORTH

Then—you're not—?

NORTH

Suppose I say I'm as happy as you.

MRS. NORTH

Then—?

NORTH

Then—?

MRS. NORTH (*listlessly*)

You're feeling worse? This place doesn't agree with you. I hoped perhaps it would; we've tried so many. Shall we leave tomorrow, or go to the hotel? Perhaps the cottage is a wrong idea. Quiet's sometimes merely loneliness.

NORTH (*consideringly*)  
Yes, that's true.

MRS. NORTH  
You feel it? The hotel—I said at first, you remember—is the best. You haven't the spirit to cope with this isolation.

NORTH  
Isolation with you! It's a thought I couldn't harbor! I think I've really a good deal of spirit—enough to see—

MRS. NORTH  
What?

NORTH  
Suppose we say—to remember.  
MRS. NORTH (*with some impatience*)  
You're frightfully bored. I understand. I'll light the lamp and read to you. (*She lights a lamp on the table between them, shading it so he is in the shadow while she sits in a brilliant circle of light. She draws a book and a magazine or two across the table.*)

MRS. NORTH  
What shall I read?

NORTH (*absently*)  
Oh, anything!

MRS. NORTH  
There's only "London Voluntaries."  
(*Reads at random.*)

NORTH (*when she pauses*)  
"And lo! the wizard hour—" This is it—my wizard hour!

MRS. NORTH (*half closing the book*)  
You like it?

NORTH  
Both. I mean the poem and the hour.

MRS. NORTH  
Ah!

NORTH  
I often perplex you—

MRS. NORTH  
I'm sure you don't feel well.

NORTH  
Even if I weren't ill, I'm not sure I would be perfectly well!

MRS. NORTH (*patiently*)  
Of course you find it tiresome.

NORTH  
I believe it's less so—being ill.

MRS. NORTH  
Dr. Ainsworth says you need "fiber."

NORTH  
Ainsworth's clever.

MRS. NORTH *is silent and turns the pages of the book.*

NORTH  
Don't you think he's clever?

MRS. NORTH  
He hasn't—cured you.

NORTH  
No—but he's handsome.

MRS. NORTH (*coldly*)  
What has that to do with it?

NORTH  
Why, that he's handsome in making the effort.

MRS. NORTH  
Wouldn't any doctor—?

NORTH  
Not as—handsomely. (*A pause.*)

MRS. NORTH (*with an effort*)  
Do you think you've enough cushions? Are you comfortable?

NORTH  
Quite—for conversational purposes.

MRS. NORTH (*shutting the book*)  
Ah! I remember. You said you wanted to talk.

NORTH  
To you.

MRS. NORTH  
Well—there is no one else—

NORTH  
Yes, there is. There's the me you used to know. I used to think him interesting—

MRS. NORTH  
Before we were married, you mean?

NORTH  
Exactly!  
MRS. NORTH (*accepting his humors without interest*)  
And you think you're changed?

NORTH  
A little. I could walk about then. And there used to be a girl—

MRS. NORTH (*trying to throw a little animation into her voice*)  
Someone you were in love with?

NORTH (*gravely*)  
Yes.  
MRS. NORTH (*yawning behind her hand*)  
Was she pretty?

NORTH  
Very pretty.

MRS. NORTH  
And did she love you?

NORTH

Does anyone ever know about a woman? I think she thought she did.

MRS. NORTH

Why didn't you find out?

NORTH

I—tried.

MRS. NORTH

Well—did you?

NORTH

I—married her.

MRS. NORTH

Oh—quite so.

NORTH

That makes it uninteresting?

MRS. NORTH

You draw conclusions!

NORTH

You think it's better—?

MRS. NORTH

Better—?

NORTH

To "make a bust of marriages"?

MRS. NORTH

That's a quotation from somebody—who?

NORTH

Not—an apostle of marriage!

MRS. NORTH (*turning the pages of the book*)

Why do you think of marriage in particular?

NORTH

Why? Well, I suppose because it's our state—yours and mine.

MRS. NORTH

But—people aren't usually interested—for argument—in the state they're illustrating.

NORTH (*laughing*)

It's stale—?

MRS. NORTH

It's accepted.

NORTH (*continuing to laugh and looking from the shadow that envelops him at her beautiful face in the glow of the lamp*)

It's the same thing!

MRS. NORTH (*with patience*)

I've never seen you so—odd.

NORTH (*in an alert voice*)

Who's that? (*The gate clicks and a firm step is heard on the gravel going around to the hall door.*)

MRS. NORTH (*involuntarily*)

Dr. Ainsworth.

NORTH

Can you see him?

MRS. NORTH

No; but it's his step.

NORTH

I can't recognize many people by their step. I think I know yours. It's like a swallow skimming over the bare places.

MRS. NORTH (*listening intently*)

Did he ring?

NORTH (*shortly*)

Jane will answer, I suppose.

MRS. NORTH (*half rising and then re-seating herself*)

I—he has so many calls to make——

NORTH

Hardly—at this hour. Besides, I asked him to come.

MRS. NORTH

You asked him to come?

NORTH (*laughing curiously*)

Yes; I wanted to talk to him.

MRS. NORTH (*nervously*)

I know you are not well——

NORTH

Do you think only sick people want to talk?

MRS. NORTH

But you—you're so—odd—tonight.

NORTH (*coldly*)

Perhaps so.

MRS. NORTH (*moving the books restlessly*)

You—seem so—nervous.

NORTH

I think *you* are, a little.

MRS. NORTH

I—oh, no!"

NORTH

I think you are tired. Go and rest. Tell Dr. Ainsworth, please, that I am waiting for him. Good night.

MRS. NORTH

But—don't you want me—?

NORTH

No, I shall have Dr. Ainsworth to talk to for awhile.

MRS. NORTH

But——

NORTH

Would you mind telling him?

MRS. NORTH (*trying to speak lightly*)

And you don't want me?



NORTH

No, my dear; not while I have Dr. Ainsworth!

*(She goes reluctantly into the house, and for a moment her husband is alone. His glance follows her as she disappears and he puts his hands over his eyes. He drops them almost instantly and stares out into the thick darkness. He does not change his position as footsteps sound behind him, and Dr. AINSWORTH comes out. He is a young man, tall and very handsome. He comes at once to the invalid and puts a professional touch on his wrist.)*

DR. AINSWORTH

You're not feeling as well as this morning?

NORTH

Yes, I think so. Don't you think I'm normal?

DR. AINSWORTH

You seem—a little nervous.

NORTH

Most invalids are.

DR. AINSWORTH

Very true.

NORTH *(after a pause)*

Invalids are expected to be—unreasonable.

DR. AINSWORTH *coughs*.

NORTH

Even if I weren't an incurable invalid, I don't think I'd be very—reasonable.

DR. AINSWORTH *(in a bored tone)*

It's a matter—of temperament.

NORTH

And of ability.

DR. AINSWORTH

Ability——?

NORTH

To get the best of things.

DR. AINSWORTH *(perfunctorily)*

Of course it's hard lines for so young a man to be struck down with an incurable——

NORTH *(interrupting)*

Incurable?

DR. AINSWORTH *(hesitatingly)*

Of course, I—hate to repeat it.

NORTH

Don't trouble. It's an old lie.

DR. AINSWORTH *(starting up)*

What do you mean?

NORTH

Lower your voice, if you please! People—will think we are quarreling.

DR. AINSWORTH *(with dignity)*

A patient has privileges a doctor has to remember.

NORTH *(with irony)*

A helpless cripple, a patient, and—at your mercy, Dr. Ainsworth!

DR. AINSWORTH *(with a violent start)*

What do you mean?

NORTH

You said that before! Does the light bother you? I hope not; my wife has been sitting there. I like to see people's faces when I talk to them. The play of expression is very—interesting. Don't you think so?

DR. AINSWORTH *(stiffly)*

I'm afraid my practice hasn't ever been with expressions.

NORTH

No? We sick people have our fancies. I've grown rather fond of personal equations. The old formula you know—minus by minus gives plus in the answer. But if there's no answer?

DR. AINSWORTH

I'm afraid I'm quite in the dark.

NORTH

Pardon me—in the light!

DR. AINSWORTH *(glancing at the lamp)*

Oh, I see; literally!

NORTH

And I am—in the dark!

DR. AINSWORTH

You're a little feverish——

NORTH

Not at all. I've been feverish, but I'm quite cool—now; cool enough to ask your advice.

DR. AINSWORTH *(puzzled)*

Advice? Professionally?

NORTH

Certainly! You are not a friend of mine.

DR. AINSWORTH

Sir!

NORTH *(shrugging his shoulders)*

I only know you professionally, I mean.

DR. AINSWORTH

Oh—yes.

NORTH  
The case is about a friend of mine——

DR. AINSWORTH  
I am at your service.

NORTH  
Thank you. My friend—you'll excuse my not telling his name?—is an invalid. He thought for a long time he couldn't ever get well. And then—his case is rather similar to mine—he found out one day that he had a chance.

DR. AINSWORTH (*suppressing a start*)  
A—chance?

NORTH  
Yes; to get well. His doctor is—a brilliant man, and able to save him.  
DR. AINSWORTH (*trying to make his voice natural*)

Able to save him?

NORTH  
Yes. He knows a way. And if he did save him, you understand, it's fame for him from one end of the world to the other—a triumph of surgery, of skill. He *can* save him, in fact; he's perfected his method—his plan.

DR. AINSWORTH (*after two or three attempts to speak*)

How do you *know* he could save him?

NORTH  
Oh, I don't! It's my friend, you know. He understands in some way—a sort of divination; an intuition, we'll say. He knows if the doctor chose, he could save him. But he doesn't know——

DR. AINSWORTH (*in a smothered voice*)

Whether the doctor will choose——?

NORTH (*clearly, facing the doctor*)

Not at all! Whether *he* will choose, himself, to be saved.

DR. AINSWORTH (*in a shaking voice*)

But if he—you—your friend—Good heavens! (*his voice grows steadier*) the idea is postposterous!

NORTH  
The idea of his being saved?

DR. AINSWORTH (*in a louder voice*)

I mean, his considering whether he'd care to be—saved.

NORTH (*casually*)

Well, I don't think he'd care to owe his life to a man who——

DR. AINSWORTH *springs up furiously and then sinks back in his chair.*

NORTH  
—of whom, we'll say, he'd have to beg it.

DR. AINSWORTH (*with a white face and a tense voice*)

That is a slur on his professional honor!

NORTH (*shrugging*)  
I wasn't considering him as a doctor—altogether. You see, he's also a man. (*Dead silence.*)

NORTH  
The doctor is sure of enormous professional fame if he cures my friend. He's fond of his profession, I dare say, and of course fame counts with him. On the other hand, if my friend dies, he's sure of a fee rather in excess of the usual. My friend's very rich. Rich in many things——

DR. AINSWORTH (*starting up*)  
This is intolerable!

NORTH  
I think it's rather interesting. I think a good deal of my friend. (*He laughs.*)

DR. AINSWORTH (*after another silence*)  
Why—why don't you suggest to—your friend—that he have another doctor?

NORTH (*laughing again*)  
That's your advice, is it? Well, because this doctor is a genius! He's made a great discovery—unknown to anyone else. My friend's tried every famous doctor over here and in Europe.

DR. AINSWORTH  
And you think this—doctor—can save him?

NORTH (*indolently*)  
My friend knows it! From something the doctor said when he first took the case.

DR. AINSWORTH (*breathing hard*)  
He may be mistaken——

NORTH  
He isn't mistaken!

DR. AINSWORTH  
And why does your friend—how does he *dare* think the—the—doctor would not save him if he could?

NORTH  
To lose the case means as much as

saving it; or more—a good deal more! Wait (*in a tone of command*). My friend would rather this were not publicly discussed.

DR. AINSWORTH (*furiously*)  
Damn your friend!

NORTH  
By all means! And his doctor, too!  
DR. AINSWORTH (*rising and standing before him with a set face*)  
Damn you!

NORTH  
Oh, I will take care of that part, if you please! What strikes me is merely this: Eliminate my friend, but—there's no fame! If he saved him, he'd be sacrificing himself, we'll say—to his ambitions; be losing bigger things—

DR. AINSWORTH  
Do you dare to suppose—the—the doctor would not do—would not save your friend for the sake of humanity?—for other like cases?

NORTH (*smiling*)  
He can demonstrate perfectly with another case—Providence permitting different conditions!  
DR. AINSWORTH (*his hands clenched*)  
Damn you! He will demonstrate with this!

NORTH  
There you mistake. My friend will not be demonstrated with!

DR. AINSWORTH  
Do you mean he'd refuse? You're mad!

NORTH  
Very sane.

DR. AINSWORTH  
Do you suppose his wife—?

NORTH (*icily*)  
I said nothing of a wife. Pray confine yourself to the facts I gave.

DR. AINSWORTH (*stammering*)  
I—I thought—

NORTH  
It's unnecessary for you to think. My friend's made up his mind, I believe.

DR. AINSWORTH (*in a controlled voice*)  
He must change it!

NORTH (*shaking his head*)  
Oh, no! That's all, I believe. You've been very obliging. I'm leav-

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ing soon, and in case I don't see you again—

DR. AINSWORTH  
Leaving! Impossible! (*Authoritatively*) I must see you every day—

NORTH  
I appreciate your—decision—but I'm leaving soon—for a change of air.  
DR. AINSWORTH (*savagely, and standing before him*)

You will stay here—*here!*—I am going to cure you!

NORTH (*politely*)  
Very good of you.  
DR. AINSWORTH *restrains a speech with difficulty.*

NORTH (*ringing a bell on the table*)  
I must thank you for your attentions—both tonight and at other times. Good-bye.

DR. AINSWORTH (*hoarsely*)  
In the name of God—

NORTH  
You have the advantage of me—in many ways!

DR. AINSWORTH  
I can cure you! I swear it! *I will!*  
You are a young man—

NORTH  
Twenty-seven. If I were an older man, perhaps I shouldn't object to your trying. Martin?

MARTIN (*coming from within and standing respectfully in the background*)  
Sir?

NORTH  
Dr. Ainsworth is leaving.  
DR. AINSWORTH (*stooping over his patient and speaking passionately*)

You can't refuse! I shall do it. I can, and I will. Don't dare to think I will take the place you assign!

NORTH  
Good night, Dr. Ainsworth.

SCENE 2. A bedroom with NORTH in bed. There is a little table drawn beside the bed with a wine-glass and a bottle of medicine, a lamp and some books. The mellow light shows the exquisite furnishing of the room and reveals NORTH's dark hair and fine profile on the pillow. There is a beautiful etching of his wife on the wall at the foot of his bed. MARTIN,

*middle-aged and deft, moves up an arm-chair to the table by the bed.*

MARTIN

Is there anything else, sir?

NORTH

Bring me that tin box on the chiffonier, and my keys.

*(He opens the box MARTIN brings him, takes out a small package, and hands the box back to the servant.)*

NORTH

That's all. Good night, Martin.

MARTIN

Good night, sir. *(Hesitatingly)* I'm afraid you are feeling poorly, sir. You'll call if you need me?

NORTH

Like a shot! But I think I'll sleep tonight, Martin. Sleep's a fine thing *(reflectively)*, like an open door—to another country. It takes a long time to get better—eh, Martin?

MARTIN *(choking and turning away)*

If I could just see you well and strong, sir—like you used to be—

NORTH

Good old Martin! Shake! I led you a life when I was a boy!

MARTIN *(holding his master's hand)*

That you did, sir.

NORTH *(abruptly, turning away his face)*  
Good-bye, Martin.

MARTIN *(correctingly)*

Good night, sir.

*(Exit MARTIN.)*

NORTH *opens the package in his hand and puts a pinch of the white powder it contains into the wine-glass, into which he then pours a little of the medicine from the bottle on the table. Then he folds the little package closely and throws it into the fireplace where MARTIN has lighted a small fire. As he falls back on his pillows, MRS. NORTH comes into the room. She wears a white dressing-gown heavily trimmed with lace. Her hair is in a large knot low on her neck and her face is excessively pale. She sinks down into the chair by the bed.*

NORTH *(looking at her intently)*

You've been crying?

MRS. NORTH

No—my head aches.

NORTH

Did you see Dr. Ainsworth?

MRS. NORTH

He spoke to me as he left—of you. He thinks—you are not—feeling well.

NORTH *(watching her face)*

Did he tell you that he had an idea that he could cure me?

MRS. NORTH

Cure you—?

NORTH *turns away and laughs.*

MRS. NORTH *(springing up)*

Is it true? Is it true—?

NORTH *(looking away)*

I did not say so! It's merely a vagary of Dr. Ainsworth's. Don't let it distress you.

MRS. NORTH

Distress me! How cruel you are! You—know if I—thought—

NORTH

Of course, of course! I take all that for granted. I meant don't distress yourself by anticipating what may never come. You look tired. All this is wearing on you. A cripple for a year on your hands!

MRS. NORTH

If—if Dr.—

NORTH *(interrupting)*

Oh, we won't consider that tonight. Let it wait. I think I shall try to get some sleep.

MRS. NORTH *(eagerly)*

Let me read you to sleep.

NORTH

No, not tonight. I'll go of myself! Please give me that bromide in the glass. *(She puts it into his hand and he drinks it, smiling up at her.)* To happiness!

MRS. NORTH *(vaguely)*

I hope you'll sleep well.

*He looks up, still smiling.*

NORTH

That's the best thing a cripple can do, isn't it?

MRS. NORTH *(almost beseechingly)*

Let me read to you—

NORTH

No, good night. *(She stoops to kiss him, but he turns away his face.)* Don't kiss me! I'm afraid I am a little fever-

ish. Turn your face—this way—a moment. Thank you!

MRS. NORTH

What is it?

NORTH

Just a whim! Your face is perfect—not a flaw! I've a fancy to dream of your face, and a—spirit to match it! (*He smiles at her with an ironic sadness.*)

Good night!

MRS. NORTH (*hesitatingly*)

Good night!

*He follows her with his eyes as she moves across the room to the door. There she turns and looks back. Her face is still intensely pale and there is an odd look of fear in her eyes. The light of the lamp falls full on NORTH's face, his watching eyes. She pauses uncertainly, her fingers on the handle of the door.*

MRS. NORTH

Is there—nothing I can do?

NORTH (*turning away his face*)

Nothing!



## THE POET

By Theodosia Garrison

HOW may my heart beat wearily,  
How may it dream of woe,  
Too much I hear with the finer ear  
To guess what the sad men know,  
Since the sound of singing, singing  
Still follows as I go.

The sound of sweet words wonderful  
Set to a sweeter tune  
Like the wind that blows through a garden-close  
In the hush of afternoon;  
All day it follows 'neath the sun,  
All night beneath the moon.

Never a poet died on earth  
But left me of his best,  
That wondrous thing that he died to sing  
By me is all possessed;  
One petal from the perfect rose  
He carried on his breast.

Never a poet yet to be  
But still I hear that same  
Great song that waits at the thrice-barred gates  
To hasten at his name,  
And lay upon his eager lips  
Its awful touch of flame.

Dead or unborn, I hear their songs  
In all the winds that blow.  
How may I guess of a world's distress  
Or learn what sad men know,  
Since the sound of singing, singing  
Still follows as I go.

# BALLAD OF AGAVA

By Clinton Scollard

**I**N the fair month of Nisan,  
(Month of the heart's desire),  
Adown the paths of twilight  
Sped Agava of Tyre.

Tinkled like moonlit fountains  
Her golden anklet bells,  
And nightingales made answer  
With rhythmic ritornelles.

Before her fleeting footsteps  
The almond flung its snow;  
The asphodel and poppy  
Were fain to see her go;

Were fain to catch the glinting  
Of those celestial eyes,  
As bright as shines Astarte  
From out the midnight skies.

Behind her in the sunset,  
A flood of rosy fire,  
Uplifted tower and temple,  
The diadem of Tyre.

Before her reached the twilight,  
Its magic of perfume,  
Its mysteries of purple,  
Its hyacinthine bloom.

In all the sunset pageant  
Her longing had no part;  
It was the vast of twilight  
That held her yearning heart;

The attared lanes of twilight,  
With leaves that wooed above,  
And a sequestered altar  
Unto the God of Love!

Within a copse of myrtle  
That flawless altar rose;  
Gleamed in the dusk its marble  
As white as Hermon snows;



While ever doves about it  
Made iterative moan,  
And unseen lips cried "Thammuz!"  
In passionate undertone.

Into the sacred presence  
Came Agava of Tyre,  
A lily in the gloaming,  
And breathed her soul's desire.

"I seek for Love!" she whispered,  
And even as she spake  
The deepest dells of twilight  
With rapture seemed to shake.

A spirit from the shadows  
With brow divinely bright  
Touched her sweet lips. Together  
They passed into the night.



## THE AMATEUR PHILOSOPHER

By Julien Josephson

**L**IVING within one's income is an easy matter—compared with living without it.

The two most variable things in the world are a woman's mind and a Central American republic.

Opportunity knocks but once—but the man who fails to heed it usually knocks forever after.

The most intense heat known to psychologists is that produced by the friction of a nickel against a small boy's pocket.

People who are always anxious to give the devil his due seldom show a corresponding solicitude for their other creditors.

Pride goeth before a collision and the chauffeur before a magistrate.

The real race problem: Picking the winner.

The rule of three: Two's company.



## AS IN THE BEGINNING

**T**HE MINISTER—Woman came into the world after man.

**THE BACHELOR**—And she has kept after him ever since.

# THE ANXIOUS SEAT

By William Hamilton Osborne

IT was nine o'clock upon a Wednesday night. John Wesley Wortendyke, evangelist, wiped the perspiration from his brow and sank into a chair. Immediately he rose again.

"Someone suggest a hymn," he said.

A woman sobbed. "Sing number thirty-nine," she whispered.

"Oh, yes. . . . Oh, yes," groaned Elder Ingersoll.

"*Everybody*—sing!" cried the evangelist, with a wave of his arm that brought the Donaldson First Church to its feet.

The Donaldson First Church was under the spell of a wonderful man. For one whole month John Wesley Wortendyke had been charging through the Sussex hills, hand raised aloft, telling men and women what they were in the sight of heaven, and—what they ought to be. He was no respecter of persons; and, with his wonderful witchery of voice and manner, his wonderful strength, his wonderful inspiration, he was laying bare the souls of men, diagnosing the disease—effecting cures. That was the remarkable thing about it—he made good.

"Sing!" he cried. And out of that little church there rolled forth a volume of sound that the hills caught up and echoed toward heaven.

"At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light

And the burden of my heart rolled away,  
It was there by faith I received my sight,  
And now I am happy all the day."

"Oh, yes . . . oh, yes," groaned Elder Ingersoll.

"Another hymn—another one!"

cried Wortendyke. And they started in again.

"Throw out the life-line across the dark wave,  
There is a brother whom someone should save—

Somebody's brother; oh, who, then, will dare  
To throw out the life-line, his peril to share?

Throw out the life-line,

Throw out the life-line,

Someone is drifting away-y-y-y;

Throw out the life-line,

Throw out the life-line,

Someone is sinking today."

Johnny Ougheltree sat through it all as one in a dream. He half wondered what it all meant; why it all *was*. He sat well back in the small church, and he glanced with considerable anxiety upon a score or more of weeping women; upon men, young and old, with faces flushed, ashamed, excited, trying to hold back feeling that strained like a hound at the leash. Johnny Ougheltree listened to it all carefully, respectfully, wondering why it didn't touch him as it had touched the others. What caused him more worry than any other thing was the effect of it all on Janet Steele, the girl sitting at his side—*Johnny's* girl. She had buried her face in her hands; he could feel her whole being throb and tremble against his body.

Outside, he heard Stella B., his mare, neigh thrice. Stella B. wanted to get back home. So did Johnny Ougheltree. Somehow, he was afraid. What was warming all the others was freezing him. It seemed to him as though, somehow, he didn't belong. But—hush! Elder Ingersoll was closing out his prayer. Elder Ingersoll knew *how* to pray. He prayed in the same tone in which he drove his ox-team at the

plow. His "Gee. . . . Hoy," could be heard three miles away. The throne of heaven was much farther than three miles, and the elder knew it; he wanted to be *heard*.

"Oh, Lord," he groaned in his conclusion, "what we have . . . ah . . . failed in askin' . . . do not Thou . . . ah . . . fail in givin'."

He sat down. Then there was a tremendous hush. Women dried their eyes suddenly, furiously. Men gripped the sides and the seats of pews. Donaldson Corners knew what was coming; it held its breath.

"The *invitation*," whispered Elder Ingersoll.

John Wesley Wortendyke stepped down from the little pulpit. He wanted to be on a level with his people. Before him, at the very front of the church, there ranged two rows of plain, wooden benches. As yet, these benches held no occupant.

John Wesley Wortendyke took one stride forward. He stretched forth his hands.

"I want you to come up here, men and women," he began in a low, tense voice. "I want you to come here and lay down your sins. . . . Come. . . . I *want* you to come. . . . Think of it. It's all so easy. Some of you need only walk a yard. The man on the back seat—he only has to walk fifty feet—or less. Just to these benches. . . . To lay down your sin. . . . So the burden of your heart will roll away. . . ."

Johnny Ougheltree stared with unseeing eyes. His only sensation was that of terrible embarrassment, coupled, perhaps, with a feeling of curiosity. He waited for something to happen. But nothing did happen. Donaldson Corners did not respond to John Wesley Wortendyke. Donaldson Corners was waiting for the *first* man to make a move.

"Let somebody else go," whispered Donaldson Corners; "we'll follow."

Suddenly Johnny Ougheltree felt a warm hand thrust into his; and a steady, tender voice was whispering in his ear. It was Janet's voice.

"Johnny," she whispered, "I'm going up there. I—I've got to go." She hesitated for an instant, and then went on: "The Lord is calling to me, Johnny." Again she stopped. "I—I want you to come with me, Johnny Ougheltree," she said.

To Johnny the voice was as the voice of love. It thrilled him. He had been cold, chilled. It warmed him. It brought the flush to his cheek. He gripped her hand in silence.

"Come—with me," she pleaded. Then Johnny released her hand. He shook his head. Once more he shivered.

"I . . . can't," he whispered. She touched him once more, half-rising; she tried to take him with her.

"No, no," he whispered again, holding back, "I—I can't do it. . . . It wouldn't be right. . . . I don't feel what the others . . ."

She was on her feet now, and John Wesley Wortendyke had seen her. He strode forth to meet her.

"One," he cried, "one. And a woman."

"God bless you, sister," wailed Elder Ingersoll.

Johnny Ougheltree sat back in his seat, rigid, digging the nails of one hand into the palm of the other. Around him the sobs broke out afresh.

Suddenly from the very centre of the congregation, there rose up a man. He was a tall, slender man, perhaps two years older than was Johnny Ougheltree. He was four years older than was Janet Steele. He was, therefore, young. He had a good breadth of shoulder. He was clean-shaven. He wore a long frock coat, and a black tie. This man was Price—David T. Price. He was a lawyer. He lived at the Corners, but his office was five miles away, in the town of Donaldson itself. His chin was good. His nose was good. He wore his hair in such manner that it was parted far down on one side, and fell far down to the other, in a diagonal sweep across his brow. His clothes were neat, but worn.

Without hesitation, he strode up the aisle. Without hesitation he knelt, at the anxious seat, by the side of Janet

Steele. . . . Johnny Ougheltree sat back in his seat, digging his nails into the palm of his hand, blinking.

That night, eight women and three men out of the Donaldson Corners congregation, followed in the footsteps of Janet Steele and David T. Price. And when it was all over, David T. Price found himself following in the footsteps of Janet Steele.

In the vestibule she turned and smiled. Price held out his hand.

"I—I want to walk *your* way to-night," he said. "I've got to talk to somebody about it all." They were quivering, these two, in the throes of a mighty religious enthusiasm. She nodded. But she waited for Johnny, and told Johnny she was walking home that night. Johnny understood. He blinked, plunged into the darkness, untied Stella B., and drove off the other way.

Then Janet and Dave Price, the lawyer, went on. Price drew a long breath, as one who had fought a good fight and had won.

"What is this," he exclaimed, "that we feel, you and I, and all the others?"

"Everything seems so different, somehow," she assented.

"We are free—free," he returned, giving speech to his thoughts, "free of—our sins. At least," he added, "I am free of mine. As for you," he smiled, "I don't believe you *ever* sinned."

"Mr. Price," she said to him, as he left her that night, and she said it all too solemnly, "we are Christians, you and I—Christians. That is what it means." At any other time, or in the light of day, they would not have said these things in this way. But it was night and the spell of the revival meeting was still upon them.

"Christians," he repeated. He hesitated for an instant. "Do you know what made me such?" he asked. "It was you, Janet. You led, and where you led I followed, Janet Steele. Where you lead I shall always follow, Janet Steele." He left her, suddenly. She stood there until the crunch of his heels upon the roadside had passed beyond her hearing. Then she pushed

open the front door, and went up to her room. She lit no light. She knelt at her open window.

"Johnny Ougheltree," she cried, within her, "I want *you* to be a Christian." There was a wail in her whisper. "Johnny, Johnny," she cried, "why didn't you come, why didn't you come with me, up to the anxious seat?"

John Wesley Wortendyke did not leave Donaldson Corners until all Donaldson Corners had knelt at the anxious seat—all save Johnny Ougheltree. But night after night that week, by the side of Wortendyke, there stood David T. Price, the lawyer, a young man with the honey of Hymettus on his lips, with something in his soul that appealed to men and women.

"Bless you, bless you, brother," Elder Ingersoll would roar at him from the elders' corner.

"Bless you," good, old, mild, conservative Dominie Peterson, the pastor, would say to Price, "you are a shining light. You are the salt of the earth." For the good old dominie had been strangely moved by it all. A pang, something like envy, smote him.

"I wish," the old minister told himself, "that I could do what these young men are doing. I would that it had been given *me* to do."

For weeks, for months, Donaldson Corners was *good*. It held close to the anxious seat. Rough men knelt, night after night, at their children's bedsides and prayed. And they gave Spinner's Hotel and Maccia's Lager Beer Saloon wide berth. They passed on the other side of the way and turned their faces. And no man jeered at them.

But through it all there was one man treated as an unfortunate. For him alone was the glance of pity. This man was Johnny Ougheltree. He had kept away from the anxious seat. He had heard John Wesley Wortendyke for one night; he had never gone back. The cry of Janet rang in his ears:

"I want you to come with me, Johnny."

"You don't understand," he told her, time and again. "I can't *feel* it,

that's all. If you don't *feel* religion, it only makes you feel like a fool. Don't you understand?"

She did not understand. In her dismay, for the spell was still upon her, she turned to Price. Price had taken, suddenly, almost head place in the First Church. Even Elder Ingersoll had taken a back seat, and kept it. Price was not only saying things—he was *doing* them. His influence was felt. The people in the Corners said solemnly that Wortendyke had planted; that Price had watered. And they spoke truth.

"I want you to save Johnny Ougheltree." This was the cry of Janet Steele, in her religious zeal, to David Price. And Price told himself that he must do it, somehow. He set his face to the task.

Meanwhile Donaldson Corners was settling back into its old ways. This was not the unexpected. Evangelistic experts allow for this.

"If we hold our grip upon *one* man," they answer their critics, "we have succeeded."

After many months Dominie Peterson looked across the field with slightly troubled gaze. Then he sighed with relief. There were at least *two* who had been steadfast: David Price, the lawyer, and Janet Steele. And he knew that they were at work upon Johnny. He hoped they might bring Johnny in. Johnny was steady, thrifty; Johnny was a good citizen. He would make a good Christian.

Johnny clung steadily to Janet. He worked all day. He was station-agent. This brought him in ready cash, and it meant only attendance at train time for four trains a day, and an occasional freight. Meantime he worked his farm—the one on the hill, next door to the station. And now he was building his house on the very top of the hill, where you could see Donaldson, five miles off, and even the spires of Newton, fifteen miles away. He was building his house. For there was one thing Johnny knew—he was a marrying man; and some day he would marry and would take his bride home to the

house upon the hill. And he clung to Janet.

During the noon hour Johnny would climb about the rafters of his unfinished dwelling. "This," he would say to himself, "this here'll be *our* room, I should think."

He noted with strange uneasiness that Dave Price came home these days, on the early train. Price loved the hills and the trees. He would sit on a stump for an hour and dream. There was an air about him.

One afternoon Price caught Janet Steele by the arm. They were together, she and Price, on Garthwaite's hill, beneath the big oak that stands out in the clearing. There was a strange light in the man's eyes which Janet could not fathom.

"I want to tell you something, Janet Steele," he said slowly and with the air of a man who has made up his mind to say what he has to say. "I want you to understand. I want you to think about Ougheltree and—me." He pointed over toward Johnny's farm. "They tell me," he went on, "that Johnny's earned that farm, built that house, and has money in the bank, all because he's worked since he could use his hands. Look at me. What have I got? Nothing. What have I done all these years? Worked; worked hard. First it was high school. Then it was college; then law school. I've got an education. I've got a profession. They call me Price, the lawyer; Counselor Price. . . . What good does it do? When I am fifty I shall reap the benefit, but not before. And I'll tell you why." He leaned over and looked the girl steadily in the eyes. "It's because I want to marry, and I can't."

She started. "Why?" she queried.

He shrugged his shoulders. "So far this year," he answered, "I've made a hundred dollars. Starvation wages, the law. We all know it. The best of us. Why, Daniel Webster made only thirty in his first two years of practice. Look at me, Janet. Look at my clothes. I pay my board. I have no debts. But—can't you under-

stand I want to marry? and—I want to marry you."

He brushed his hand across his face. Then he strode to the wood-lot fence and laid his head upon his arm. Janet Steele hesitated for an instant. Then she followed him.

"Don't—don't give way like that," she told him.

He straightened up. To her his face seemed defiant, belligerent.

"Don't give way?" he repeated. "You don't know. You can't understand. You don't know my family history or the people from whom I sprang. I have red blood flowing in my veins, Janet Steele." He stopped for a moment. "I've tried to be good all my life," he went on, "and I've done my best here. The anxious seat called to me, and I came. I've tried to be a Christian; I've tried to do a good work. But," he went on fiercely, "you don't know what it means—to be a man who wants to marry; to be a man who loves, yet who must wait a lifetime." He buried his face in his hands; there was a sob Janet could feel but could not hear. Then he caught her by the shoulder.

"I've tried to be good. I *am* good," he went on, as though protesting against himself, "and yet"—he stretched forth his arm to the place where, fifteen miles away, a big town was basking in the setting sun, blood-red—"and yet, Janet, hell and the painted women are calling me away."

Janet Steele uttered a startled cry—not at the man's words, but at the glance that drove them home. Then she spoke, and in her voice there was a note of genuine pity, of distress—the mother tone, perhaps.

"I think . . . I understand," she answered gently.

The Corners watched Janet Steele and Johnny Ougheltree and D. T. Price. Under ordinary conditions its sympathy would have been with Ougheltree, the native; but David Price, since the advent of John Wesley Wortendyke, had endeared himself to the people. He had helped, he was helping Donaldson Corners—not with money, but in

many practical ways. Dave Price "counted some," they told one another. And in the Corners it was said that he was the only honest lawyer in the county; the only man who took his religion into his business. It was nip and tuck.

"Wonder which she'll marry," the village asked itself, "and—when?"

Time passed. And, suddenly, the Corners held up its hand in horror. And Johnny Ougheltree didn't know it; he never guessed. But he kept on, doggedly, calling on Janet, hoping against hope that he was to be the man.

One night, as he left Janet's, a man plunged out of the brush by the roadside and hailed him. The man was David Price.

"I want to see you, Johnny," Price exclaimed. "I want you to come down to my room. You've *got* to come."

Johnny went. He could see that Price was laboring under some great excitement.

"This thing I *must* do first," Price muttered, half aloud.

"What?" asked Johnny, puzzled.

"I was only talking to myself," said Price. He took Johnny to his room, and lit his lamp, and locked the door.

"Ougheltree," he said earnestly, "I want you to tell me something. I want *you* to tell *me* what you think of God?"

Johnny Ougheltree was startled. The manner of the man before him was so strange, his face so pale, that Johnny feared his mind had given way. Johnny did not answer.

"Tell me," repeated Price.

"Why, why," stammered Johnny, "I don't know. I never think of Him, you see."

"I knew it," exclaimed Price, "I knew it. You're just like other men today. You're good and nothing else. And now, I'm going to tell you something. I've got this work to do, even though it takes all night."

His manner changed. Johnny Ougheltree thought of him afterward—was glad to think of him, as he sat there with some mysterious radiance



on his face. And David Price began; and Johnny listened.

"You've got to think—tonight," said Price to him. And they sat there for four hours, these two men, so strangely different, while David T. Price wrestled with the soul of Johnny Ougheltree.

When it was all over, Johnny Ougheltree staggered forth into the early dawn exhausted, like a drunken man. Upon him was a great peace.

"I was blind—blind," he cried within himself, "and now I see. At last I understand. At last I see the light."

He toiled up the little lane that led to his now completed house upon the hill. He pushed open the door, and ascended to the second-story front room. He knelt by the eastern window of that vacant chamber. Upon his face was the glow of the rising sun.

"Janet—Janet," he cried, within himself, "I've followed you—up to the anxious seat."

And David Price had done it.

Johnny knew now where his duty lay. All that had lain dormant in him was awake—awake for good. Where Johnny set his face, his footsteps followed. For the first time in his life, he told himself, he had become a man—a godly man. And he would live as such. Nothing would turn him from this new life on which he had entered.

"What," he thought to himself fearfully, "what if Dave Price had never crossed my path? I should never have known, never have understood religion. And now it's mine—it's mine."

All day he worked in the field and at the station, and song was upon his lips and in his heart. He knew what he had to do. It was for him to make public acknowledgment in the First Church. That very evening, early, he would see Dominie Peterson. Then he would tell Janet Steele.

"Perhaps, after all," he thought to himself, "it was this that Janet had been holding off for. Perhaps now . . ." He glanced up the hill at the new house.

"The second-story front," he mused

to himself. "That'll be *our* room, I guess."

It was fifteen minutes before the last down train that afternoon, that David Price entered the station. He carried with him a suit-case. He was still pale, still extremely nervous.

"Ougheltree," he said, "you saw me last night; you heard me talk to you. You thought you knew me then. You didn't. I have faith in you. You will go on in the way you have started. . . ."

"The way you showed me," gasped Johnny.

David Price gripped him by the arm. "Ougheltree," he went on, "I have never said a word in Donaldson Corners that I didn't mean—that I wasn't sure I meant . . . But listen. In my blood there is a thing called *irregularity*. Do you understand? You'll find it out—too soon. Upon me is the mark of the beast . . . But you don't know; you cannot understand."

Far up the road there was a toot. "Johnny," he went on, drawing a white envelope from his pocket, "this is sealed. Please deliver it for me. No, don't look at it now—read the address later. And . . ."

"You're going away," said Johnny.

The other nodded. "For a time, yes."

Johnny flushed. "There's one thing," he said, "that I'll never forget. That was—last night."

They stood there silent until the train came in. David Price swung aboard. And the last glimpse of his face and his last words Johnny never forgot either.

"Remember," called out Price, with a sudden gesture that pleaded for himself, "the mark of the beast."

"Be good," cried Johnny.

"I've tried," called David; "I'll try—and try again."

Johnny thought about it later. David Price meant it when he said he would try again. Yet, as Johnny knew later, the way to try again was all so obvious. It meant, just to stay; not to go away; to go back to . . .

Johnny, with the great peace still

upon him, waited in the parlor of the parsonage, while Dominie Peterson might complete his evening meal. The dominie came in finally, and peered into the corner, and slowly lit the great lamp. Then he started.

"It's you?" he said. His voice was hard.

Johnny strode forward. "Mr. Peterson," he said simply, "next Sunday is communion Sunday. At that time I want to join the church."

Dominie Peterson started back as though shot. "Do you mean it?" he queried. There was no enthusiasm in his voice.

"I mean it," answered Ougheltree.

The parson clutched him by the arm. "Come here," he commanded, "where I can look upon your face." He pulled him beneath the light, and gazed long and earnestly at him.

"You *do* mean it," he said finally. He pressed his hand against his brow.

"Son," he said finally, "no man can come into my church with a great wrong left unrighted. You must first make your peace with God."

Johnny Ougheltree stood uneasily. "I will do that, Mr. Peterson," he said finally. "Tell me what to do."

Mr. Peterson drew himself to his full height. "You know it, sir, as well as I do, as well as the village does!" he exclaimed almost fiercely. "Go! And come not back until you have made amends. Go, and marry Janet Steele *this night*. And *then* come to church."

A spasm held Johnny Ougheltree's frame in its grasp, but only for an instant. For one moment he stood there looking vacantly at the clergyman before him. Mr. Peterson returned the gaze with interest.

Then Johnny Ougheltree walked out with bowed head. "I shall come back again," he said.

He did not know how he reached Janet that night. The next thing he knew was that he was with her, alone, in the little sitting-room in her old aunt's house. Perfunctorily he pulled from his pocket the sealed letter that Price had given him. She took it nervously

and broke it open. He stood while she read it.

"Oh, . . . God!" he heard her cry. Never had he heard a wail like that. She sank for an instant into a chair. Then she rose and hastened into the hall and up the stairs. He followed.

It was well he did. There was no outcry between them. He merely wrenched from her the small bottle which she had thrust against her lips, and cast it far out into the night.

"Janet," he cried, "come downstairs. I have no right here in your room."

She obeyed him.

"Janet," said Johnny softly, when they were once more below, "I've got three things to tell you. But there's something that I want to find out first. . . . Did you *love* Dave Price?"

She rose. To Johnny Ougheltree she had never been so beautiful. Her face seemed the face of a martyr.

"No," she answered simply.

"Then—?" he queried, as one who had the right to know.

She hid her face in her hands and sobbed. "To save him," she wailed, "from the painted women, and from hell."

Ougheltree nodded. "I understand," he answered her. "I would have done anything to save him . . ." His face brightened. "He saved *me*, Janet. He was good, good, but for one thing . . ."

He thought how Price had said, "Upon me is the mark of the beast."

"It's one of the things I wanted to tell you, Janet," went on Johnny, "only one of 'em. I'm going to join the church." He leaned over toward her, and upon his face there was a glow the girl had never noticed there before. "Janet, girl," he whispered, "you asked me once to come with you to the anxious seat. Would to God I had gone."

"If you only had," she wailed in her grief.

"Janet," he went on, "I want you to lead me there, *this night*."

She looked at him, startled more than ever. "You don't . . ." she began.

"Janet, girl," he answered simply, "do you think that a *mistake* is going to rob me of my life or you of yours? Did you think my love would go by the board all for a mistake? I guess you don't understand. . . ."

"But," she protested, "the people in the village. . . ."

He averted his gaze, for he suddenly had come to understand the things the girl had suffered.

"There's no fear," he told her, and flushed hotly as he did so; "there's no fear. They've laid it to *my* charge."

Then she broke down almost beyond control, weeping silently, that her old aunt might not hear her, deaf though she were. She broke out incoherently, exclaiming that Johnny was a Christian . . . a Christian . . . a Christian.

He touched her gently on the head. His touch soothed her.

"I'm a Christian," he assented proudly, "but I guess you don't understand me altogether . . . Janet, girl . . . look at me . . . I love you. Don't you see?"

He placed his arm about her, and drew her toward him. "Janet, girl," he exclaimed, "there's one other thing I've got to say. You asked me once to

come with you . . . I want you *now*, to come with me . . . *at once*."

They looked each other full in the face. Then she slowly yielded, and they passed together out of the door, and down the lane. Half-way up the village street they turned into a gravel path and knocked at a door. It was opened by the pastor of the Donaldson First Church.

When it was all over, Mr. Peterson took them warmly by the hands.

"This," he remarked, "is as it should be. . . . Now," he said solemnly, to Ougheltree, "I shall be glad to welcome you into the church next Sabbath. . . . How," he queried, "did it happen?"

Johnny hesitated. "I was converted," he said finally, "by David Price." As he said it, he remembered only one face—that of Price the apostle. He was glad to forget the face upon which was stamped the mark of the beast.

Hand in hand they left the parsonage. They wandered across the railroad tracks, and up the hill to the right. They reached the new house.

"It's all finished," Ougheltree announced, "and we can go in next week." He stretched forth his arm. "It seems to me that the second-story front room ought to be our room," he said.



## HIS IDENTITY

**L**ITTLE ELMER—Papa, what is a prosecuting attorney?

PROFESSOR BROADHEAD—He is the gentleman, my son, who will, if you happen to be poisoned by your wife, take great pleasure in appearing in public with your stomach in a glass jar.



**A** WOMAN'S EXCHANGE—a divorce colony.

# MOTORMANIA

By Gelett Burgess

	\$	c.
I HAVE a motor-runabout, And I have often wondered How I could ever do without My car, which cost. . . . .	800	00
It plays me many a little joke; I well recall my fix When my left steering-spindle broke— That cost exactly. . . . .	6	00
The other day I broke my chain, It gave me trouble, plenty; But still, I oughtn't to complain, It only cost. . . . .	4	20
My carbureter wouldn't work— I tried till I was blue; An expert gave it just one jerk And charged. . . . .	3	22
She went so fast, when this was done, She seemed to be alive! And then—my pump refused to run! A new one cost me. . . . .	5	00
And I was happy—just a day, And then my joy was o'er! My battery failed. I had to pay For cells. . . . .	1	44
I thought that I had known the worst, And dared to laugh at fate; When suddenly my tire was burst; New shoe cost. . . . .	38	00
And then my radiator went; A new one. . . . .	27	00
Repairs to brake, a lever bent, A dust-cap. . . . .	2	11

	\$	c.	
And now I <i>was</i> a little vexed; My lamps went back on me! It was my generator, next; They stuck me. ....	13	03	
This tinkering with my machine Was but because I blundered; With garage, oil, and gasoline, I spent another. ....	100	00	
TOTAL:			
But still, I've had a month of fun Despite repair-shop rows, and After it all is said and done, I've only spent. ....	1,000	00	



## LA CHANSON DU JOUR

Par Amélie Murat

L'OMBRE s'éclaircit... Dans l'étable close,  
Les coqs vigilants sonnent le réveil;  
L'aube matineuse, ouvrant le ciel rose,  
Laisse à l'Orient monter le soleil...

—Midi! Dans les champs, où des blés en gerbes  
La chaleur du jour gonfle les épis,  
Sur leur couche molle et profonde d'herbes,  
Les bruns moissonneurs restent accroupis...

—Mais déjà le soir, ombrant la campagne,  
Fait, par les sentiers, rentrer les troupeaux...  
Leur retour agreste au loin s'accompagne  
Des sons détachés et lents des pipeaux...

—Puis, la chaste nuit, d'un voile bleuâtre  
Ceignant l'horizon, endort, à la fois,  
La chanson rustique aux lèvres du pâtre,  
Les susurrements des nids dans les bois.



MAY—Would you marry a man with one foot in the grave?  
BESS—If it were far enough in.

# QUEER PEOPLE

By Owen Kildare

**L**ISTEN! There's no use o' talking, there's queer people in this world. And the funny part of it is you meet them where you least expect them. Who'd ever think o' finding queer people down here in the Fourth Ward? But they're here just the samee—and maybe I don't know it.

If them tenement houses could only talk, they'd tell you stories that'll make your hair curl. They were built for working people that belong down here, but more than oncet some ex-this or ex-that came down here to hide. You can tell that kind o' people a mile off. All their lives they been running to meet trouble, never thinking that trouble's been always chasing them. You know that saying about the face being the mirror of what's going on on the inside? Well, the wrinkles on these people's faces made their stories easy spelling.

There was the case o' Lady Clare, which I'm going to tell you, not because it was the funniest that ever happened down here, but because—oh, just because I'd like to tell it, and—because I liked Lady Clare.

A couple o' years ago, her people moved in, up there, on the top floor, into two dinky little rooms, with one window for their air and light. I was living across the hall from them. They only had a few sticks o' furniture, but you could tell that they wasn't bought in no store 'round here.

There was three in the family, father, mother and the Kid. Oncet I seen a picture of a piano-player with a wild bunch o' hair, and the father was the dead-likeness o' him—as far as the hair

was concerned. But that ain't saying so much, for the man with the biggest head o' hair ain't always got the most brains. The mother looked a dead-ringer for a foreigner, with black eyes and black hair. And speaking about eyes, you ought to seen the Kid's. After talking to her you couldn't remember nothing only her eyes. They were black, the same as the mother's, but there was something funny about them; they always looked at you as if they were asking something. Time and again I been talking to her and feeling as if I was getting cross-examined in court. Besides the eyes, she was mostly skin and bone.

Well, the parents must have sown wild oats good and plenty, for they had a corking harvest, which they didn't like to pick, for a cent. They had nothing but trouble, and while women take to pins when in trouble, men take to corkscrews, and you can imagine the rest. The father used to go uptown and fiddle in the streets for pennies, and the wife used to stay home and spout crazy language. I used to hear her holler about "me honor is more than life," and "a woman scorned is a regular devil," and other daffy stuff like that, which put me wise that she was an actress. In the evening, after he cooked the supper—she didn't know enough to boil water—she'd go to work and rave by the hour and he'd sit there, kind o' dopey, and never say a word—just watch her.

They used to leave their door open most o' the time, and I could pipe them off from my shack across the hall, and on the level, they certainly were a queer bunch. My own candid opinion is that

the father and mother were a bit off'n their trolley. And to cap the climax, even a blind man could see that she was booked for the golden shore, with the conny or some such sickness.

One night I rubbers over and sees her all dressed up in swell togs, in one o' them skirts with more on the tail than up 'round the neck, and on her head was some kind o' glittering dido, that looked like the real goods, but was phony at that. And, take it from me, she was all to the mustard in looks.

There she was, waving a bunch o' flowers—fakes—and reciting a couple o' stanzas and rolling them eyes to beat the band. Something was telling me, when I looked at her close, that her acting days was most over. The husband, while she was acting away, was hugging his fiddle and playing so soft, as if he didn't want to wake anybody. And his eyes followed her all over the place, and there was love in them, and then again he looked as if he hated her.

They were daffy, the two of them!

While all that was going on, the Kid was crouching back o' the stove, her eyes as big as saucers. And whenever the mother waltzed past her the little fist would shoot out, trying to touch the mother's fancy dress, and would always pull back just when she could have touched it.

And, let me tell you, them two old ones were no four-flushers. I can tell an actress when I see one, and anybody that can get music out'n an old fiddle like his—honest, you couldn't have got thirty cents for that agony box—must be a swell fiddler all right. I've heard some out-o'-sight fiddling in my time, but this gent could beat them all. Sometimes I was sitting in my room, all by myself, and listening to him playing away, and on the level, I often felt as if something was going to burst right inside o' me, he put so much feeling into it.

Well, one night when I came home I seen them up against the finish. I sneaked into their room and there was the woman on the bed, holding the husband's hands and begging him

to forgive her and he telling her she's been forgiven long ago. As they weren't paying no attention to the Kid, I took her over into my room so's she wouldn't hear things that are mighty hard to forget afterward.

After a while it got all quiet, and then I knew it was all over. That was about ten o'clock, and she was taken away in less than two hours, for I got Andy Duffy, who was the leader of the district, to hurry up things on account o' the Kid.

When I fetched the Kid back to her own place nothing happened like what I expected. The old man sat by the window with his head in his hands looking at nothing in particular. The Kid never looked at the bed or nothing, but went right over to her father, stroked his hair, oncet or twicet, and then, when she thought I wasn't looking, she kissed him.

"Come to bed, father," she whispered to him, just as cool as anything, and took him by the arm and led him like a child.

Of course, I didn't know the history of that family, but I had my own opinion. I seen enough o' life to know that often the same woman is loved like mad by one man, while another could see her hanged without losing any sleep over it. As to the woman in this case—I got nothing to say for or against her. If you can't leave a bunch o' flowers at a coffin you don't have to smear it with pitch.

Things went to the bad for fair after that. It takes a man to build a house, but only a woman can make it a home, and in less than no time their place was something fierce. The father didn't care; he came and went and left the Kid all to herself. He was always a day behind, as if today was yesterday, and was worrying so much about past troubles that he didn't have time to smile over past smiles.

So, when I saw how the Kid was kind o' forgotten I thought I'd take a hand in the game. I watched for the fiddler to go out on his route and then went across the hall.



You'd never guess what the Kid was doing!

I went in without knocking and there she was on a chair, in front o' the looking-glass, wearing the same long-tailed skirt the mother had on when I used to hear her spouting, and her hair was all twisted up on top so's to hold that funny thing with the phony stones.

"What in the world are you doing?" I asked her.

"I'm a regular lady now. I'm Lady Clare," she answers, as serious as anything.

"Ah, cut that out! I'll show you a better game," I says, not liking the idea of her getting daffy over that crazy stuff.

I put her in a chair and meant to talk to her like a father, but, d'you know, she looked at me so wise I couldn't say much. Anyway, I told her it wasn't good for her to be stuck in that room all day and that she ought to be in the street playing with the rest o' the children.

"But I never played with any children," she says.

"It's never too late to learn," I said, "and, besides, people that are only popular with themselves never have any friends."

I made her take off that fancy rig and took her down to the street. Then I called over Sadie Kirkpatrick and Becky Cohen, who were sitting on the curb, and told them to play with the Kid.

That being fixed, I went next door into Andy Duffy's, had a glass of ale and got talking politics with Andy. In about an hour I came out in front o' the saloon to finish my seegar and looked 'round for the Kid.

It was a sight all right!

Right below, on a stoop, was Sadie Kirkpatrick, Becky Cohen and Mamie Dowling, sitting up as stiff as if they were in Sunday school. In front o' them, talking to them with her hands up in the air, like her mother, was the Kid. Naturally I wondered what kind of a scheme they were cooking up, and found out in a minute. I could see the Kid was trying to drill something

into the other three and they were all excited.

At last the game seemed to be all fixed, the three pupils got down off'n that stoop, and then the four came prancing up to where I was standing, as if they were a procession. First came Becky Cohen, chasing other children out o' the way the same as the policemen in front of a parade, and then came Lady Clare, with Sadie and Mamie holding up the tail of her skirt behind her. Gee, that was funny enough, but with the Kid's little short skirt up in the air and them poor pipe-stem legs sticking out underneath, well, I thought I'd die.

I went back into Andy's saloon, and told Con, the bartender, about it, and, there being nothing doing in the line o' business, he came out to take a look at it.

The parade was just in front of the door when Con came out. They halted and Lady Clare made Sadie and Mamie let go of her skirt. Then she came over to Con.

"Please, d'you know what a tarara is?" she asked him.

Con wasn't over-long from the old country and thought she was kidding him.

"Ah, go on and play and don't be bothering me," he growled.

"Oh, please, is it a tarara that's worn in your hair?" she asked again.

"I have no tararas nor nothing in my hair," said Con, and came inside again to tell Andy Duffy and me about the girls trying to make a fool o' him.

Duffy was something of a practical joker himself, and so he went out to see what was the matter with the kiddies.

"What d'you want to know, girls?" he asked them.

"Please, sir, we want to know the name of that thing ladies wear in front of their hair," says Lady Clare. "I think it's a tarara."

"No, me child, it's not a tarara they wear in their hair," says Duffy, looking wise for fear o' laughing, "but it's an um-tarara."

"Thank you," says Lady Clare,

dead serious, and turns around to the other three. "I'm going to have an um-tarara like a lady."

After that there was nothing but the um-tarara, and all the girls in the street were wild because of Lady Clare telling them all about the—well, all about that thing she thought was an um-tarara.

In this life a person only needs a little mystery for to get a reputation, and Lady Clare, with that funny thing, which none o' them had seen yet, was the only pebble on that block, let me tell you. Of course, that could only last for a while because, after all, seeing is believing. So, to keep her pull, she had to produce that um-tarara thing which she'd been talking about so much.

I happened to be up in my room when I seen her sneaking out with that thing. I looked out o' my window to see what kind of a reception she got, and, honest, it looked like a fire the way the children got around her. And that—oh, that um-tarara thing made such a hit that it had to be taken down the next block for to be inspected there, too.

She wasn't gone long when the fiddler came home. The first thing he saw was the trunk open, and he didn't do a thing but swore. He thought he got robbed, and I had to go over and explain things to him.

"Excuse me," I said, "but there ain't been no thieves in your house. Your little girl just took that—that um-tarara thing, and she'll be back in a minute."

"My daughter has what?" he hollers at me.

"I don't know what you call it," I had to tell him, "but it's what them actresses wear up in front o' their hair."

"Actresses?" and he scowls at me. "Actresses? Man—queens, empresses alone wear"—I think he only said tararas—"whether queens of mighty realms or of art, and it's being profaned."

"Bug-house," I said to myself, and went back to my room.

A little later I heard my Lady Clare come tripping upstairs and wondered what was going to happen to her. The door didn't stay open, but went shut as soon as the Kid got inside—and Lady Clare didn't shut it neither. There wasn't much of a scrap, but I didn't have to be a mind-reader to tell what was going on on the other side o' that door. It was the first time the Kid got beaten.

On the level, I felt bad about it, but a man has no right to interfere between father and child. I couldn't stand it up there and went next door to Duffy's. There was a lot o' fellows in there and we got talking politics. It was a couple of hours before I got back to the room and everybody was asleep—at least, I thought so.

I was good and tired and drowsed off the minute I hit the bed. All of a sudden I thought I heard something out in the hall. But I was too sleepy to get up, and dozed ahead. An' then again I heard a noise. For a while I laid there, wondering what it could have been. There was no fear o' thieves, the only thieves there was in the house were paying rent and knew their neighbors had nothing to swipe. I put on me clothes and looked out o' the window. I could see nothing. I looked up and down the street, but there was nothing nor nobody, and I was for pulling my head in again when, right acrost from me, I sees the Kid sitting on a stoop and staring up at the old man's window as if she couldn't turn her head no other way.

Well, you can just bet your life I was down them stairs before you could spell "Jack Robinson."

She didn't seem a bit glad to see me, and I found out right there and then that it takes a good wise man to understand what's going on in a child's mind.

Sure, I got to pumping her right away, but it was no use. She wouldn't say nothing, only sat there, as white as a sheet, staring up to the window. The worst of it was I couldn't get her to cry. You know there are some kids down my way that never got

their feelings worked up to the stage of crying, and that makes them hard, hard in head and heart, and it's a sign of encouragement when you can make one o' them forget everything else but that they're kids and let them spill their tears right up against your clean white shirt-front. But Lady Clare wouldn't cry worth a cent. Instead o' that, she turns 'round to me with: "You been the only one that's been good to me and I'll reward you one o' these days. They all been hating me. I never been petted like the other children; they didn't even think enough o' me to whip me until tonight, when I didn't do nothing. And, now, I, too, am going to hate——"

Maybe I didn't clap my hand over her mouth! I had no mind to let her finish that. To switch her off to something else I got talking about that thing that started all the trouble.

"Say, kiddie girl," I says to her, "I wouldn't call that thing an um-tarara. I don't think that's the right name and, besides, it belonged to your mammy and we don't want to make no fun o' that."

We sat there for the longest while, me trying to cheer her up. I told her I'd give her a dime tomorrow, and promised to take her for a trolley-ride, and told her about some o' the shows I'd seen, and how I fought Mike McGloin, the brute, and other interesting facts, but it was no go and I knew I was up against a puzzle. And then, all of a sudden, her head gets kind o' leaning over to me shoulder and the poor Kid was starting to dreaming, maybe of loving mothers and fathers or maybe of just them um-tararas. She never woke up whilst I was takin' her up to my room and tucked her away as comfortable as I could. After I had fixed her up for the night, I didn't lock the door, but just shut it and went next door to bunk with Con, the bartender.

It was bright and early when I was hammering at the fiddler's door. Three times I had to hammer before he answered. When I got in at last

I grabbed a chair and plumped into it as if I meant to stay all day.

"How dare you intrude, you loafer?" he hollers at me with a lot of other stuff.

"Keep cool," says I. "High words and low language are twin brothers and don't come from a decent family. We're going to talk it over and you might as well take it nice and easy."

"I have no business with the likes o' you," he says, and splutters something about "man of family" and "blue blood" and such like.

That made me think that if he was a man o' good family he must have traveled quite a lot to get where he was and, as to "blue blood," I gave him the benefit of thinking him color-blind.

But that kind o' talk got me mad, and so I took him gently by the arm and made him sit down, after which I locked the door.

Well, sir, if you ever seen a Philadelphia lawyer I was the part all right. I bluffed and jollied and it took me most of an hour before I pried open the shutters that gave me a peep right into his very inside. But once he got started, there was no holding him and he spun the whole story right off the reel.

He'd been a fiddler in the band where the wife used to be a prim donner, and there they got hitched and thought they would never be unhappy again. And then, when the Kid come, they were 'most tickled to death. But as soon as the wife tried to go back on the job, there was something wrong with her pipes and she couldn't sing no more worth a cent. That made her turn on Lady Clare and she fell to brooding. Next she tried to be an actress, but she was so broke up that she could never play more than a week at a time. But when she did act she was the real article all right, all right—and maybe I didn't know it. Anyway, she got a little weak in the upper story and thought everybody concerned would be better off if she was to take a transfer for the golden shore. She made a lot of

attempts and in the wind-up he had to give up his fiddling so as to stay home and keep his eye on her. That kind o' life wasn't healthy for the surplus of their treasury, and that's how they got down our way, when the Kid was old enough to watch her mother and he could go out and fiddle in the streets for the pennies.

What I didn't like about the story was there wasn't much in it about the Kid, only about himself, his wife, art, lost honor and reputation. It's all right to be crying about lost honor when you got nothing else to do, but it's best to try and save a few shreds of it as long as there's a living chance.

Well, I ain't much on beating about the bush, and so, just the same as a poor devil gets a lawyer assigned to him in court when he ain't got the cash to put up for one, I took the Kid's case and pleaded it like a Dutch uncle. Now, don't you be running away with the idea that I'm much on slinging language or oratory. And, what's more, I don't care if I never learn how to do them orating stunts, for I think there's a whole lot of difference between oratory and talking common sense. All I did was to tell how his girl had been living, all alone and forgotten, which he, her own father, never knew. And I knew what I was talking about. It's tough to be a kid and have to trot along through life without ever a bit o' love now and then. It's fierce, that's what it is. I had seen hundreds of good kids in the ward going to the devil just because of that very same thing. Kids, boys and girls, want more than beef stews and bread and molasses, and because they don't get it when they ought to get it, they never won't stop filling jails and asylums.

I gave it to him that way, good and strong, and then I turned on a little hot air for to salve him down a little. I told him what a comfort the Kid would be to him in his old age, and how she could look after his meals and his clothes and could sew on his buttons.

And—would you believe it?—he sat through my whole spiel, never saying a

word—which would have done him no good, anyway, for I was wound up for fair. When I got so dry I couldn't spout any more, I stopped and waited for the verdict.

What d' you think he did? He gets up and puts out his hand to me. Then he throws a couple o' bokays at me, and says: "You made me see how wicked I been."

"Quit your kidding, you old lobster," I says, to cheer him up, for I could see he was getting kind o' mushy. "Wicked—nothing. You been asleep, and I been your alarm clock. And now, for heaven's sake, stay awake and get acquainted with your family."

Then I put a flea in his ear about something and chased across the hall for Lady Clare.

When I brought her over, she and the father stood still for a second and then they started for each other. In his hand he had that hair-ornament with the phony stones and, after they done their hugging, he hands it to her.

"My um-tarara," cries Lady Clare, as if she been happy all her life, and all misery was forgotten.

Of course we had to celebrate the day. I went down in my kick, and all I could find was one plunk and a half. But if I wasn't any too strong, the fiddler had a piece o' money, and off we went to Central Park, and elephants and ice cream.

Well, sir, I'm almost ashamed of it, but honest, we acted like kids. We didn't know much about the trees and flowers, and was kind o' doubtful about them wild animals, but we could tell the grass, if we wasn't hayseeds.

Oh, sure, it was all foolishness, and a lot o' them swell people were guying us, but it's a good old world when you ain't got dyspepsy, and we weren't guilty of that offense.

So we had the time of our lives, and came home dead-tired.

I was just pulling off me shoes when there came a knock at the door.

"For the love o' heaven," I soliloquizes, "that love-feast ain't fallen through again." The knock came once more.

Sure enough it was Lady Clare.

"I only came over to tell you," she says, "that it's a tiara and not an um-tarara. Papa says so."

"Gee," says I, "that's great news, and I'll sleep better now; but don't you think it would have kept until morning?"

And—and this is on the level—there she stood trying to mash me, or I'm a sinner. Then she wanted to whisper

something in my ear and not a soul in sight for to overhear anything.

She whispered all right, and, sure I couldn't refuse a lady, and so she kissed me right smack on the mouth.

Honest, I blushed—but anyway, it was dark.

But, when you think of it all over, you can say what you like, women are either all to the good—or they ain't.



## THE LITTLE QUAKER MAID

By Samuel Minturn Peck

SHE was a little Quaker maid,  
 Her gown was quaint, her mien was staid.  
 Forsooth, no wild-flower by a brook  
 Was ever shyer in its look.  
 So sweet her eyes whene'er by chance  
 'Neath drooping lids peeped forth her glance,  
 The while her cheeks the lashes kissed  
 One thought of stars behind a mist;  
 And as the Summer roses shed  
 A scent that lingers when they've fled,  
 So did the luster of her eyes  
 In absence to my memory rise  
 To heighten joy, to banish pain.  
 And as we strolled adown the lane,  
 Beside the gate her face grew sad;  
 And tremblingly to me,  
 "'Tis late," she said, "yet I'd be glad  
 If thee would bide a wee."

She was a little Quaker maid,  
 And when she'd spoken, seemed afraid.  
 Had she propriety o'erstepped?  
 Oh, most appalling thought! She wept,  
 And quivering stood bedewed with tears,  
 Unconscious that, to soothe her fears,  
 The apple-blossoms drifted down  
 And gave her maidenhood a crown  
 Most fair and meet. I gazed a-thrill.  
 Had I the power—I had the will—  
 To win a love so lily-white  
 It shamed in spotlessness the light?  
 I dared. I spoke—the words were few,  
 And what they were, I never knew.  
 But this I know; no longer sad  
 Her face smiled up to me,  
 "Think thee 'tis late? I am so glad—  
 Come in and bide a wee!"

## AN OLD SONG RE-SUNG

By Robert Gilbert Welsh

'T WAS Jeanne, the pretty *laitière*,  
She made a cheese beyond compare,  
A very ball of gold.  
"But yes, I'll lace my bodice brown,  
With ribbons criss-cross up and down,  
And ere the day is old  
Across the village will I go  
And bear this cheese to Père Morot."

Hers was a tender conscience, so  
She catechized her glass to know  
If she, in truth, were vain,  
What time upon her curly head  
She tried the blue knot, then the red,  
And then the blue again;  
But while she strove with thoughts like these  
A favorite cat ate up the cheese.

Her cry of anger rent the air,  
The blue knot shivered in her hair,  
Her ribbons quaked with fear.  
"Behold my cat—it is a pig!"  
She flung at puss a skillet big,  
It struck behind his ear.  
There, prone upon the kitchen floor,  
Behold her cat—it was no more!

Her cat was dead; her anger died,  
Upon the floor she sat and cried,  
She cried a deal—oh, yes!  
Hers was a tender conscience; so  
She went, at length, to Père Morot:  
"Mon Père, I would confess.  
I lost my temper, and through that  
I also lost Purrine, my cat!"

Good Père Morot, he is so mild,  
*Mon Dieu!* As simple as a child,  
And yet, withal, so wise.  
Although on Jeanne still kneeling down  
He seemed to cast a heavy frown,  
I saw his twinkling eyes.  
"Thy penance for this sin confessed,  
Go, kiss the one you love the best!"

"An easy penance, sir!" she cried,  
 And from her posture at his side  
 She joyfully uprose.  
 Hers was a tender conscience—so  
 She kissed the worthy Père Morot  
 Beneath his very nose.  
 . . . You'll find her, sir, beyond this hill—  
 I think she's doing penance still!



## A MARTYR TO HEALTH

By Alex. Ricketts

"THERE goes Armstrong. What a picture of perfect manhood he is!"

"Yes, poor chap. But at what a cost!"

"Why, he looks as healthy as a mule, and as robust as a team of 'em."

"So he is, so he is. Never has been sick in his life; doesn't even know what it is to have a cold. But, poor fellow, just think with what endless suffering he pays for it."

"Why, how's that?"

"He's a martyr to his health."

"I should think that would be a cheerful martyrdom."

"Think so? Perhaps if you had to endure for a single day what he goes through with every day of his life, you'd take the aches and anguish of a chronic invalid for your choice."

"Pooh! nonsense!"

"Well, listen. He jumps out of his warm bed at six every morning, no matter how far below zero the mercury has shrunk, into a room every window of which has been wide open all night long. Then he spends half an hour working ten times as hard as a hod-carrier exercising every muscle in his body. Next he plunges into an ice-cold bath, and then he rubs himself vigorously with a towel, beside which broken stone is soft and bland, until he's about flayed alive. He prances down to breakfast feeling as though an elephant would be just a snack, but all he takes is a small saucer of cereal, and gets up from the table twice as ravenous as he sat down. He walks from ten to twenty miles every day. He never sits up later than ten o'clock. He never touches coffee, tobacco, or any kind of budge. He's always on the verge of starvation, because it's unhealthy to fully satisfy your hunger at any meal. He has to laugh at every fool's idiotic jokes, because a cheerful disposition is according to the rules. He's always in danger that some new fad will add to his labors. He doesn't know the luxury of being cuddled and comforted and petted because he's not feeling well. And—and—well, that's only a part of the price he pays. There are plenty of other stunts that I've forgotten just at this minute."

"Whew! I'd no idea that doctors' bills were so cheap. Let's go and do everything he doesn't."



# WHITE ROSES

By Ludwig Lewisohn

MRS. BADMINTON suppressed a sigh as she combed her hair. The lines of silver, infinitely slender yet, would only gain in breadth and distinctness if she gave way to her gathering emotion. A scene with oneself is hardly less destructive in its effects than a scene with another, and may as easily become a habit; so that her only refuge from the insurgent years lay in an increasingly rigid restraint.

A life of emotional calm was, evidently, her safeguard, and yet for such a life it seemed hardly worth while to cultivate a barren comeliness. She looked at her hands and saw the blue veins shimmer a little too obviously through the white skin; she took up a hand-glass and noticed a line, faint but fateful, on either side of her mouth.

She was by no means a coward, but that these recent discoveries should seem insistently luminous today, when she would need so sorely all her power, charm and self-possession—this fact struck her as a cruelly gratuitous infliction of fate. She had a vision of Paul's clear, childlike eyes, and it seemed to her as if those gray hairs, those veins, those lines, must assault their sight, must cry out to him, clamorously, stridently, must drive him away to save from contamination the freshness and faultlessness of his own exquisite youth.

She knew what she had been to him, and at what terrific cost to herself; she remembered the anguish of innumerable hours when she had forced herself to speak of his work, to follow the subtle movements of his mind, or others in which she had restrained

his measured fervor by assuming a laughing superiority. She was so terribly afraid of his youth and of her years.

Thus she had held him, she believed, by a continual denial of the deepest needs of her woman's soul, and had held him to no purpose at the last. For, during the past few weeks those great, clear eyes of his seemed to see visions beyond her in the distance, visions—so Eva Badminton told herself—of a field of poppies, and a white girl with crimson poppies in her hair and in her hands, walking with him through the flowers to the rushes of some clear river.

Mrs. Badminton saw that picture again; it was so finely in harmony with her conception of him. And today she felt, and had felt with singular persistence during the previous night, today words would incarnate her imaginings.

She glanced at her watch and saw that it was time to dress. He should wait a little, but not too long. She put on a plain black frock that accentuated the pallor of her face. A bit of chamois leather that rested on her dressing-table she flicked out of the way. She would be merciless to herself and honest with him. There should be no deception, at least. If she could wrest from him some genuine emotion, if thus the victory in which she had no faith should by some strange and incredible chance be hers—it would be an entirely honorable one. She sat for a moment by the window and looked into the tawny orange of the sunset clouds.

A soft, light wind of Spring stole in

upon her. It was the last time, she told herself, that the Spring would seek her out. Her Winter was coming, a Winter of body and of soul in which she would sit and shiver and consume herself with the memory of perished years. She yielded only for a moment. The luxury of sentiment was not one of her indulgences. She knew this, and the recognition seemed to make her strong. To surrender the good gift that could not be rightly hers, with entire graciousness, with brave renunciation—that was a task worthy of herself and of her love.

When she entered her sitting-room Paul was already there. He strolled about in his lithe and graceful way, but, hearing her footsteps, he came to her with a slightly obvious impulsiveness.

"At last!"

"Have you been waiting long?"

"Not very, but it always seems long when I am waiting for you."

Eva looked at him silently. There had been little amatory phrase-making between them of late, and that he, in a constrained return to it, should grow almost fatuous seemed to her of evil foreboding. He was very evidently withholding himself, some deep part of himself, from her. She felt between them suddenly a wall of glass, invisible, but hard and unyielding. Her desolation there, on her side of the impalpable barrier, stretching out vain hands to him, gave her a keener terror than the prospect of a nerve-racking crash should she boldly shatter the wall, or even of sharp fragments drawing blood. He was scarcely aware, she perceived, of her silence, but kept his eyes steadily upon far visions. A ray of the setting sun burned in his hair. Eva prepared herself for extreme measures. For a moment her resolutions wavered. But when at last she spoke she heard herself, half-wonderingly, utter a complete banality.

"Have you written anything of late? It's a long time since you showed me your last verses."

"A very little, a few lines—and I've

burned those. Things are so beautiful and verses so flat."

"What things?" she asked, in spite of herself.

Paul passed his white hand over his eyes.

"Oh, everything! The simple things—the sky and the new leaves and the slant rain."

"And what thing in particular?" she persisted, with a sad smile.

A light of cold, almost cruel curiosity stole into Paul's eyes. The exquisite regret of the past days suddenly left him. Why should he not tell her the inevitable? She had had all he could give—her. The play was over, and it was ever so much more comfortable to ring down the curtain sharply.

"What thing in particular?" she asked once more.

Her voice irritated him, and he spoke abruptly:

"Margery."

For a moment Eva could not see and something caught in her throat. The primitive womanhood in her, so carefully repressed, cried out for reproaches, for prayers, tears, for all that Paul would have called a vulgar scene, for all he would have despised and turned from. For in this slight, fair boy dwelt a soul which she called at times stoical, and at times unfeeling. He would have no mercy on weakness with its, to him, infinitely jarring display of crude emotion, emotion so void of the neatness and proprieties of art. If she seemed completely unmoved, then, and then only would he conceivably be touched. All this had become a matter of instinct rather than of knowledge to her, and it took her but a few minutes to present to him a perfect semblance of calm interest. Seeing her calm, the coldness and cruel curiosity passed from his attitude, for these had been caused by the anticipation of such a scene as he abhorred. He fell back into his dreamy state.

"And who is Margery?" Eva said softly.

"I don't know." He arose and stood by the window. In the red of afterglow his hair shone like old gold.

He turned his delicately formed profile to her and looked far away. "I was out in the country one day, last month, last week—I don't know when. There was a field by the river, and the field was full of red poppies. Oh, they were so very, very red—like the mouths of girls. It was sunset and the sky was full of unearthly colors, and it was so still, and the air was soft as a girl's cheek and as sweet-smelling. It was so still. I turned around and there was Margery—and a ribbon fluttered at her throat."

"And then?" Eva's voice came tremulously from the dusk of the room,

"And then we walked down to the river and I kissed her."

He turned around, a little wearily, she thought. He had evidently forgotten the mere possibility of her protesting.

"It's getting dark," he said. "I must go."

"You are coming again?"

"Perhaps."

"Soon?"

He raised his eyes to her white face and a faint glimmer of pity came into them. Then he touched her forehead very lightly with his cool lips.

When he was gone Eva had her black hour in the room from which the last red shadow of the afterglow had faded. A real emotion, she believed, a troubling love, had been wrung from him at last by some slip of a girl. She did not believe that he would return or barter the reality of love for its shadow, and his love for her had been a shadow. This truth she had always faced. Now even the shadow fell upon her no longer. She was left alone.

## II

PAUL had revisited the field of crimson poppies that ran down to the river. Near it he had found another field thronged with clover. When the light winds passed over it the leaves shook and undulated in a perfect rapture of Spring. Paul would lie down and press his hot cheeks against the cool,

dewy greenery, and Margery would come and sit near him. She had a few tiny freckles across her little nose, and perpetually astonished eyes, and the young, white skin of her neck and arms gleamed through the thin stuff of her bodice. And this scene was all that had, just then, a glory and a meaning to Paul. Consciously he rested in the fresh simplicity of its charm. He dreamed of it through the night after he had touched Eva's forehead with his cool lips, and the next day he returned to the haunt of his dreams.

Across the green fields Margery, in white, came to him. She looked thoughtful, at once, and eager. Paul kissed her little hands.

"You are the very spirit of Spring."

"Oh!"

"You should not live in a house with vulgar dead things about you, but in the fields where the flowers and leaves dance in the wind."

"Not live in a house? Gracious! Where am I to live!"

"I did not mean what I said—literally," Paul stammered.

"You talk so strangely; one would just *know* that you wrote poetry and that sort of thing."

A curious misgiving came over him, but just then the wind blew a long tress of Margery's hair across his mouth. He looked into her wondering eyes, and drew a tiny volume from his pocket.

"I have written some very beautiful things, Margery. None so beautiful as you, or the clover, or the blue sky, or the little white clouds there over the river; but beautiful for all that. Do you want to hear them?"

"Yes," said Margery; but she looked anxious.

Paul read from the little book, and, as he read, persuaded himself that all these poems had been written to Margery, so that his voice trembled not only with the beauty of his own verses, which he felt with extreme sensitiveness, but with the immediate fervor of the moment's intoxicating charm. He read with the peculiar intonation of the poet, giving all vowels and rhythmic effects an almost exaggerated value.

At the last stanza of the last poem his voice grew husky. The rhythm of his verse and the nearness of Margery, and the blithe wind among the green leaves—these things thrilled him to tears.

"I have not missed the thrill, the sweetness of  
The passion-flower of a world's desire,  
Have not been silent in the deathless choir,  
Nor stood a beggar at the Gates of Love."

He looked at Margery and saw that she was pale and that her lips quivered.

"I don't see why you come here if you love another girl like that!"

Paul sat up sharply. It was no disinterested joy in his verses or in the magic of the morning that had moved her, but sheer, vulgar jealousy. She looked so pathetic, however, so forlorn, that he stretched out his arm toward her.

"Don't touch me!" she cried.

"Margery," he said, "dear little Margery, in literature words often assume an intensity far, far beyond the facts or emotions that inspired them. Besides, that is of the past, of the Winter, of the darkness. Why should it trouble us? See, that is what I care about it!" He threw the little book from him into the shadow of a tree where he could easily find it again. "Margery, look at the sky and the clover. Oh, we must be happy! This is our sweet, irrevocable Spring."

Margery sobbed and drew her face into ugly little creases. She hunted for a handkerchief and found none.

"I don't know what you mean," she said, "but if you wrote all that about another girl, why don't you go to her? I've been worrying the whole time since I saw you last. You've never even asked my name, and so mother says you can't be common honest."

Paul felt a little dazed. Also, he winced at the idea of being discussed by Margery's probable mother.

"Ah, yes," he said, "forgive me, Margery. What—what is your name?"

"Margery Smith, and my father's the station-master over at Ripley Junction. I thought you'd come over and call on my people if you really

loved me, as you say, and now—" She broke off in a disconsolate little wail.

Paul sprang to his feet. The shimmer seemed to have gone from the grass and the blitheness from the wind. He had a sudden and wonderfully cooling vision of himself as a guest at the excellent station-master's table. Then he had other visions, seeing for a moment, and almost in spite of himself, with Margery's eyes. And what he saw was a village church, and Margery in frowzy finery and himself, and a parson near them. A cool smile hovered upon his lips. He looked at Margery, seeing no longer the spirit of Spring and of immortal youth, but an intensely practical though conventionally sentimental young person who expected him to declare his intentions. That was the word Paul used to himself—intentions. He savored to himself the word's unspeakably common associations, and a cold shiver ran down his back. In Margery's world, evidently, there was no playing with emotions. He pursued, for an instant, his silent investigations into that world, and, in the process, called himself Margery's "young man," or, a happy afterthought, her "beau." He laughed a little and then looked cold and detached.

"Dear Margery," he said, "I am afraid that I have made a grave mistake in meeting you here, and I must beg you to forgive me. I am a very unpractical person and I did not foresee your point of view. I—I suppose we had better say good-bye."

Margery looked at him with wondering, wistful eyes. He was talking to her as she had heard Summer boarders at the big hotel talk to the servants, with cool and easy condescension. She felt this change sharply, and it robbed her of words. She did not take his outstretched hand. A few tears rolled slowly down her little nose. She would not cry before this—stranger. Suddenly she turned and ran off across the fields.

Paul did not look after her. For a few minutes he looked like a puzzled child. Into his clear eyes came an expression of utter innocence of the

primal wonder of the world, unsophisticated and miraculously young.

He was thoroughly aware of the grave elements, from average humanity's point of view, of the scene that had just taken place. But he knew from experience that if he let this glamour of innocence come into his eyes, a sensation of lightness, of irresponsibility, of complete freedom, would follow. Whenever a moral scruple annoyed him he became a child—so exquisitely puzzled, so irresistibly engaging, even to himself, that conscience, black and ominous though it might be, cleared at the fairy vision.

He pouted ever so slightly and then looked bored. The field, the sky, the river, all had become wretchedly prosaic. The clover was positively damp. He picked his way through it daintily until he found the little volume he had thrown away. Very carefully he dried it with his handkerchief and slipped it into his pocket. All the long way to the city he kept his hand affectionately upon it, for it was to him then the symbol of that life wherein he had his distinct place, where people understood him, petted him, and where, above all, his emotional experiments were not turned into vulgar scenes. He thought of Margery with a quiet and final contempt. She had wanted to marry him, the coarse vixen, to domesticate him—Paul French. He shuddered and drew away from a plainly dressed woman who sat next to him in the train. To venture outside of one's own world was, evidently, to court destruction.

The train passed between two walls of natural rock, emerged suddenly, and in a sunset haze of crimson, violet and orange, pierced by innumerable sharp electric lights, New York swept into view. Paul felt a rapture of homecoming to dear, familiar things, in the midst of which he became sure of himself and of others. He walked from the station through the violet-shadowed streets, under the dancing lights of a delectable city.

He went to his rooms and dressed with dainty precision. He touched

his fair curls lightly and affectionately, looked into the mirror, and stood entranced—quite impersonally and without vanity—at the wonderful gracefulness of his flower-like face. And Margery had wanted to possess him, keep him, monopolize him! It was incredible. He looked delicately contemptuous as he drew on his gloves and went out.

On the street he bought a white rose and called it "*Mors Amoris*" and sweetly pitiful verses came to him with the plangent pathos of a world's sorrow sighing in them. The literary values of the day's happenings gripped him, and contempt and all kindred feelings vanished. He hastened to the restaurant where he intended to dine, asked curtly for paper and pencil—he never carried either—and then waved the waiter aside. For an hour he sat at the little white table, feeling neither hunger nor thirst, and when at last he looked up, wonderful tears at the beauty of his own verses welled up in his eyes. Memories, too, had awakened in him, for he had written in the elegy that lay there, all but illegible, of another Spring, a year ago, when he had met Eva Badminton.

'Tis not thy wind, O Spring, that stirs my tears,

But thy forgotten brother's who has gone  
To the far valley of oblivion  
With all the Springs of unremembered years.

He chanted the stanzas softly to himself, and now the faint fragrance of the pale rose beside him seemed the ghost of the unforgettable scent of Eva's hands.

He lit a cigarette at last, and drank a liqueur of an immortally beautiful shade of green from a fragile glass. He ate only a little. He wanted to go to Eva and bury her in innumerable white roses. There should be no red rose, or pink, or faintest cream color—only the pallor of a far, imperishable past. He wanted to go to her and chant to her his verses of a Spring which she had created and must create again. But it was late, and he was very tired. He walked home slowly through the silent streets, and only,

before going to bed, took time to copy out his new verses.

### III

IN the morning the white rose looked stained and wilted, and the pathos and violet splendors of dusk had faded from the verses. Certain lines were positively flat. Paul lay in bed and considered them. He was too accustomed to the reaction against the product of a happily creative hour to attribute to it an exaggerated value. But he saw very clearly that the poem needed work, sighed impatiently over his recognition of the fact, and then fell upon the line with a blunt pencil. Near noon he emerged from numerous scribbled sheets, bathed, ate breakfast, dressed, copied the revision of his poem, and looked into an empty world.

Upon the dreamy horizon of his thoughts glimmered the figure of Eva. In the glare and heat of noon her image was to him a well of spiritual coolness and refreshing. He thought of her laying her slender hand on his curls, and the thought appealed to him so poignantly that he felt the impulse, there and then, to clothe it in verse. But a half-conscious instinct of intellectual economy withheld him. Instead, he sent a telegram to her distant part of the city, where she could have the delight of a garden, asking her to be at home to no one but himself that evening.

During the hours that followed a fear which he steadily refused to formulate, pursued him silently. He knew that he would say things to Eva that he could not, afterward, be held responsible for, and the experience of yesterday had, after all, inspired him with a vague distrust in the emotional disinterestedness of her sex. Though Margery was less to him than last night's faded rose, he knew that he would represent himself as one whose heart had received a wound. Eva on the veranda in the gloaming, holding white roses to her face and a

shimmer as of starlight in her eyes, himself with yesterday's experience to relate, beside her—and he would no more be able to resist making the utmost of that situation than he could resist the impulse to live and to write. He would explore the depths where lie our broken ideals and perished dreams, soar into some lyric rapture of love and faith made perfect—and oh, the irony of it—believe it all! He did not formulate this, knowing himself too well to need set terms. As evening approached he found himself picking phrases of such luminous aptness, turns of such unfathomable pathos, so piercing and so delicate at once, that he seemed to walk on air in an ecstasy of self-admiration. On the way to Eva he bought great clusters of white roses and so his ruin was already consummated.

Eva was on the veranda, calm and clear-eyed. A day and a night of sane reflection had passed over her. And in that time, brief as it was, she had made a startling discovery; she had found that, in some subtle way, life was so unspeakably easier without Paul's youth and temperamental fear of the crude effects of natural humanity to live up to; she had found a luxury long denied in yielding to certain instincts of her mature years, to impulses which she had long repressed. For the first time in many months she had not expected him—the telegram had taken her by sharp surprise—and in that absence of tense expectancy had come an easeful relaxation of all her faculties which she still savored. She had felt for the first time how his demands upon her spirit, upon her emotions, upon her power of self-restraint, had worn upon her. The tenseness of her love had snapped forever in the involuntary peace which his absence had wrought. What alone she feared was a return of the fever of her soul, of the throbbing of her temples at his step, of her own brave but wearing smile with which she had so often hidden the sobs that rose chokingly in her throat. If these things returned with his presence, she

prayed for strength to renounce him, and the agonies he inspired, forever.

He gave her the white roses and sat down beside her in silence. The slender poplars in the garden stood black against the crimson glories of the sky. Over the tallest of them, touching the tree with its one luminous horn, floated the new moon, so fresh, so clear, so silvery, and near it the immortal evening star. The poplars swayed and trembled in the breeze and the petal of a white rose in Eva's lap heaved and fell. The black pupils of Paul's eyes expanded in the dusk until the blue iris was barely visible.

"Eva," he said, "do you remember?"

Her hand tightened upon the stems of the roses.

"You were dressed in white, and had white roses in your hair, and the white stars were over all. And then I came to you. I have come back—a suppliant."

His eyes shone with a moisture brought on by a rapturous appreciation of the exquisiteness of the scene and of his own words.

"And Margery?" she asked.

"Margery," he said softly, with a break in his voice. "Margery? In the field by the river where the poppies nod and the winds race through the clover a girl met me. She was so white, so white. . . . But she has gone home—to Dreamland."

Eva's lips tightened.

"I want to know about the real Margery, Paul!"

He put his hand over her mouth. A whole world's sorrow and tenderness were in his look.

"And when she had gone I, too, came home—to you."

Something in Eva rebelled. Oh, he did it too well, too perfectly.

"Paul," she said, "I have often thought of you as a boy. But you speak the language of a man and so assume certain rights—the right to be held responsible, among others. There is but one way in which an honorable man can come home to a woman. Are you prepared to have your words so

interpreted? I am—oh, no matter how old, and there is gray in my hair, and the shadows under my eyes will soon be called by a harsher name, and you—you will never grow old. Look closely at me, Paul. I am getting old and wrinkled——"

Paul shivered with disgust and disappointment. Was this unutterable prosiness an inherent quality of the female mind which could not imagine love without spoiled dinners and babies' boots? Must Eva descend to the same practical coarseness as Margery? Was it impossible to feel and say beautiful things with impunity? The horror and implied sordidness of it all shocked him unspeakably. He made a last effort, but the conviction had gone from his voice.

"We must all grow old," he said, "and at last the dust will fall upon our eyes. But why think of it? You are beautiful with a faint unfading beauty which the years cannot mar. We must hoard our wonderful hours, hours such as this, and not think of age and death."

"You evade my question." Eva was merciless to herself and to him.

"Your question?"

"Paul, is it impossible to strike from you a note of sincere feeling? Are you all sham and tinsel? How much of the charming nonsense you have been talking will you believe tomorrow?"

Paul pouted and the look of the spoiled child came into his eyes. He spoke sullenly.

"I don't know!"

"I thought so," Eva said quietly. "My dear, in your absence, short as it was, in the conviction that you would not come again, somehow the glamour faded and I found that I *could* live, could be at peace without you. I never thought you capable of feeling deeply; it was my fancied need of you that made me cling to you. Now that is over—and must not come again."

She put her hands on his shoulders.

"Good-bye, dear."

"Whenever you see white roses," Paul murmured, "you will think of me,



and when their fragrance floats to you an old regret will moan in your blood."

Her hands dropped and she smiled at him with wistful despair.

"That, too," she said, "was literature—not life. But perhaps you are right; who knows?"

Paul looked at her in silence for a moment and then went slowly out through the garden, past the swaying poplars and under the quiet stars. He did not look back. When he opened the gate he stopped for a moment, and

when he closed it behind him he looked exultant. He walked far and long through the Spring night, murmuring the verses that came to him, thrilled by their beauty and perfection. They were gradually reduced to writing, and these quatorzains, "To Veronica, Overseas" (Mrs. Badminton did not go abroad), were afterward considered those poems of his first period in which Paul French had most triumphantly succeeded in expressing, in haunting and immortal cadences, the supreme exaltation and despair of love.



## AFTERWARDS

By Charles Hanson Towne

O H, to think that the world will go on  
After we are dead!  
Lovers will go on loving,  
The old, old words will be said.

New buds will bloom in April,  
And white be the apple-bough;  
June will return, the birds troop back,  
The earth be as glad as now.

The long, green pageant of Summer  
Will march its accustomed way,  
And year after year the Autumn pomp  
Will crimson the pallid day.

Lovers will go on loving,  
The words that we said will be said,  
When you and I are forgotten,  
When you and I are dead!



## REVERSED

JONES—Why do you think it queer you were refused by three insurance companies before you were accepted?

WILSON—Because it seems I was taking the risk instead of they.

# THE FOOD OF THE HEROES

By Maurice Francis Egan

THE literature of fiction has suffered immensely from popular prejudice, and its power has been immensely overrated by popular ignorance. It is supposed to lead youth to indulge in dreams of sentiment. This may have been true in the remote past, but in the present the novelist is a very practical person. A cursory glance at "the best-selling books" will show this. In that mirage of iridescent mysticism, "The Garden of Allah," for instance, the lady in the case promptly returns the monk to his monastery when she finds that he has no visible means of support. And the canny Mrs. Humphry Ward's version of the love story of the romantic Julie de Lespinasse is anything but sentimental. Lady Rose's daughter prefers a duke to a *faux pas*.

After all, this regard for the main chance shows that the novel of today is not written for the young, but for the judicious. A more important question—which might be considered by Messrs. Neill and Reynolds—is the recklessness with which novelists feed their heroes and heroines. In this the novelists have been permitted too much latitude. The public was misled by them—fearfully misled—until meat embalming became the fashion and even the esthetics of the canned-food industry were forgotten. We have seen labels on cans where the nice consideration of values was never thought of—where large blue peas reposed on yellow grape-leaves. But enough of this; let us examine inductively the evidence which must damn some of our novelists effectively in the

opinion of those who believe that the stomach and the heart control the development of the world. An act of Congress cannot reach them; that is, it cannot reach the dead, or restore taste that for several generations has been horribly vitiated.

One of the worst offenders was the late Lord Beaconsfield. It may be said that his novels have ceased to influence anybody. This is a mistake. Their influence is all the more pernicious because one no longer reads them in the partisanship of political passion. If Lord Beaconsfield had been sincere he might have done much to form the British taste; but his insincerity and his frivolity are so palpable that he did infinite harm to a country in which a good cup of coffee is unknown and vegetable marrow is actually eaten! Even in his early youth—when one might expect to find the dew of simplicity sparkling on his knife and fork—he is incorrigible. In "The Young Duke" he thus describes a feast. The *menu* is written on a "pink *carte*," Disraeli tells us. He adds, in a perfectly unscientific, general way, that Vitellius might have been pleased with the banquet—Vitellius, an old-fashioned and ostentatious Roman, whose ideal of gourmandize was the mere expenditure of money!

"Ah," cries ("cries" is the word!) the author of "The Young Duke," "how shall we describe those soups which surely must have been the magical elixir!"

What soups? The thick or thin of the "Complete British Housewife"? Recipes for these soups were not given

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by Disraeli in a foot-note because he did not know what they were. They were not, it is certain, of the only family of soups that can be termed "elixir"—the Gumbos. Thackeray named his delightful negro servant—the only creature of his pencil in "The Virginians" that has any reason to exist—"Gumbo," but he never could have known the delicious meaning of that word. One can know it only by living among the great Créole families of Louisiana. Mr. Cable knew it, but he was too deeply engaged in keeping the bonnet of his dialect on straight, and in teaching moral lessons, to give full attention to it. The scrupulous New Orleans *Picayune* had not in his time revealed to the world, in "The Old Créole Cook Book," the secret of that Isis of soups, the Gumbo. How could a mere Londoner like Thackeray know about it? A man that raved of bouillabaisse in a famous ballad could hardly have dreamed of the aroma of Gumbo. You can find Gumbo *filé* in some New York restaurants; but since the well-known incidents in the career of Monsieur de Crève-Cœur (René, not Alphonse; it was Alphonse who left the table at a club in Philadelphia because the champagne glasses were placed on the table before the fish was served) it is very rare.

Monsieur de Crève-Cœur insisted that a soft-shell crab should be presented to him on an earthen platter at a restaurant in Manhattan, in order that he might see it alive. This was held to be a mark of such distrust that the chef, Monsieur Annabale Desmarest, the real inventor of *Pêche à la Melba*, rushed from the kitchen to challenge Monsieur de Crève-Cœur. "Behold me!" exclaimed René de Crève-Cœur, "it is me!" (*c'est moi!*). Monsieur Annabale Desmarest paused, and then fell upon the neck of René, with tears; he, too, had lived in New Orleans!

"I recognize you, monsieur. For years you kept a secret—an evidence of the indiscretion of youth which would have ruined me if you had revealed it: you and *you* only discovered

that I left the wild thyme out of the Gumbo *filé* on your grandmother's *fête* day!"

There was a touching exchange of confidence. And when René died—*saucisse de bouille* was the approximate cause—among the wreaths sent on the sad occasion was one from the chef, of wild thyme. He and the departed alone understood the significance of the offering; but a brutal American that knew something of René's checkered career printed it "wild times," and the relatives were justly indignant at the impertinence of the good Monsieur Desmarest.

Some research workers have insinuated that when Brillat-Savarin returned to France from New York in 1796 he took with him the recipe for Gumbo *filé à la Créole*. Not wishing to differ too violently from these gentlemen, I must say that their implication is utterly foolish and absurd. When France let Louisiana go from her the Créoles, loyal in heart to the traditions of their country, quietly revenged themselves. They invented Gumbo *filé*, and ever since a horrible jealous remorse eats at the heart of France. You may write the history of France without mentioning the name of any Frenchman; but you cannot write the history of the cookery that fed her heroines and mention the name of one Frenchwoman! And the secret regret that causes the chefs of France to look back on the Louisiana Purchase with even more pain than they feel when they think of Alsace-Lorraine is occasioned by the fact that Gumbo, the perfection of all soups or *purées*, was perfidiously invented by a woman, to show France what she had lost.

Brillat-Savarin *did* know a Créole of great taste in New York, a Créole who was so shocked by the amazing lack of "goût" there that he refused to learn enough English to ask for bread. "Bah!" he said, "why should I learn the language of a people who have such little taste!"

"I," says Brillat-Savarin, in his incomparable treatise on gastronomic

methods; "was happy among the Americans. I spoke like them, I dressed like them, and I strove not to show more wit than they." What he thought of the cooking in New York is shown by several rows of asterisks under the title "*Séjour en Amérique.*" There are people who say that it has improved!

The greatest passage relating to the *cuisine* in all English literature is pronounced by an exiled chef to be in Bulwer's "*Pelham.*" This is the romantic and sentimental style in which Bulwer's type of the English gentleman was fed. Rocher's restaurant has passed away, with that of the Three Provincial Brothers and the Café Procope. It was in the rue Mont Orgueil, Bulwer says.

"Oh, blissful recollections of that dinner!" he raves. "How at this moment you crowd upon my delighted remembrance! Lonely and sorrowful as I now sit, digesting with many a throe the iron thews of a British beef-steak—*more Anglico*—immeasurably tough—I see the grateful apparitions of *Escallopes de Saumon* and *Laitances de Carpes* rise in a gentle vapor before my eyes, breathing a sweet and pleasant odor, and contrasting the dream-like delicacies of their hue and aspect with the dire and dure realities which now weigh so heavily on the region below my heart. And thou most beautiful of all!—thou evening star of *entremets*, thou that delightest in truffles, and gloriest in a dark cloud of sauces—exquisite *foie gras*! Have I forgotten thee! Do I not, on the contrary, see thee—smell thee—taste thee—and almost die of rapture in thy possession? What though the goose, of which thou art a part, has indeed been roasted alive by a slow fire, in order to increase thy divine proportions—yet has not our '*Almanach des Gourmands*' truly declared that the goose rejoiced amid all her tortures, because of the glory that awaited her? Did she not, in prophetic vision, behold her enlarged and ennobled *foie* dilate into *pâtés* and steam into *sautés*—the companion of truffles—the glory

of dishes, the delight, the treasure, the transport of gourmands! Oh, exalted among birds apotheosized, did not thy heart exult even when thy liver parched and swelled within thee, from that most agonizing death; and didst thou not, like the Indian at the stake, triumph in the very torments which alone could render thee illustrious?"

There is a touch of insincerity about this; it is merely academic. Besides, it is sophomoric. Burgundy is the only wine mentioned, and the repast—of which *Pelham*, the elegant, remembered only the fish and the *pâté de foie gras*—was succeeded by *curaçoa* punch! There is hardly a man of taste, even in Omaha, who would not know better than this. Like the dinners of "*Ouida*," it has an air of unreality.

"*Ouida*," by the way, is in her view of eating more like Lord Beaconsfield than any other writer. You hear much about the pedigrees of her wines. You never know whether they are iced or not. There is an intolerable deal of adjective to very little food. The lack of actuality in her heroes and heroines is accounted for by this. You do not care to hear that the Falernian, which once sparkled in the caves of a luxurious Augustan at Capri, throws out a thousand gem-like tints under the glowing eye of Lady Hermangelda du Guesclin; or that cobwebs, "like threads of frost, glittering gray pearls, enlaced the bottles of Chianti that might have come from the cellars of the Dorias!"

One is naturally desirous to know what really is consumed in the best English society. One is surfeited with horrible middle-class English food by Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope. Knowing that the English are a conservative people and that they seldom change, one goes to Thackeray, to Bulwer, to Lord Beaconsfield, believing that the dinner, after the English manner of 1830, is the dinner today, but with what unsatisfactory result!

How Disraeli and Bulwer fail we have seen; and if we turn to Thackeray, we discover that whitebait at the Star and Garter, Richmond, is the height of

his desire. Sole he likes, too; but there never was any real sole—there can never be real sole *au gratin*, except at the Café Marguery, in Paris. So sweet was the reminiscence of this delicious fish that even a learned priest lately—we blush to recall it—committed a strange error against clerical modesty.

When Sir Edward Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius" was to be sung in a well-known Anglican cathedral, the honest Protestant rector warmly objected to the phrase on the programme, "Hymn of Souls in Purgatory," as not part of his formula of faith. This learned priest was appealed to. It was after dinner, it is true. He was sleepy and off guard. His friend, the Abbé Bordeaux, sojourning in Oxford, had just fed him with a good fast-day dinner. "What shall we substitute on the Anglican programme for the phrase 'Souls in Purgatory'?" he was asked. "Why, fried soles, of course," he said. It was an unconscious *bon mot*; he has not since offended against clerical modesty.

Thackeray, after all, has taste and feeling in the matter of cookery. Beaconsfield was capable of serving vegetable marrow on a cold dish, embossed with the arms of the Medina-Coeli—those heaven-descended Spanish Jews about whom his imagination loved to flutter. Poor dear Dickens was always impossible—mutton roasted "with potatoes under it to save boiling," tripe and onions!

A celebrated physician remarked on one occasion that so many of Dickens's pathetic children died young—you remember the fate of little Nell and Paul Dombey—because he fed them on "combinations unfit for any civilized digestion." Dickens knew what comfort is, but he was a stranger to the delicate luxury of the authors of a better generation who will not permit purple-shaded candles to illuminate a course of green asparagus or allow American beauty roses to flash and flare when the true *gourmet* is about to approach his fork to a *vol au vent de ris de veau à la crème*.

Dickens's stews are perfection for the shipwrecked sailor or one of the worthy proletariat who feeds to live.

Sir Walter Scott speaks of sweetbreads once—I think in "The Fortunes of Nigel"—but with no apparent perception of their real esthetic value. In fact, diligent examination has shown that there is scarcely a novelist who knows what the sweetbread is. Balzac and Daudet do; Bourget seems to; but it is only from the context of his various books that we come to that conclusion.

As to Thomas Hardy, George Meredith, Marion Crawford, William Dean Howells, they evince an amazing negligence in the use of this test of the knowledge of the effect of physiology on psychology. Mr. Crawford is all the more blamable, as he had, we understand, the honor of the tutorship of the finest epicure north of New Orleans that our country ever produced, the late Mr. Samuel Ward!

As to Marie Corelli, she is capable of feeding her unhappy characters on anything that attracts her inflamed imagination. Miss Braddon showed signs of rudimentary knowledge, but she continued to live in England, which is hopeless, and ended by washing down wood strawberries with *champagne fine*.

Mrs. Wharton and Mrs. Burton Harrison, careless as they are in prescribing the diet of their people, err through indifference; though when either author permits a person in good, or, rather, bad society, to take a whisky cocktail with oysters, she reaches the awful limit which Bulwer touched when he let his elegant hero revel in quarts of curaçoa punch after a dinner of fish and *pâté de foie gras*. In neither "The House of Mirth" nor "The Anglomaniacs" is there a really good bill-of-fare!

The assumption of nearly all novelists seems to be that the sweetbreads are a "pancreas," a gland situated between the stomach and the vertebrae of the loins of calves. They are really the glands in the throat of any young animal, especially the sucking calf!

And, on the tables of the reverent and scrupulous, they are always served in plates wreathed with lilies-of-the-valley. Violets are inappropriate—as inappropriate as watermelon without cluster bouquets of red crêpe myrtle.

If our novelists really mean to be scientific, they must get rid of old-fashioned prejudices. Thackeray understood the sensitiveness of the great cook; but how horribly he outraged it! You perceive his attitude in the glimmering of better light in his "Ballad of Bouillabaisse":

This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is—

A sort of soup or broth, or brew,

Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,

That Greenwich never could outdo;

Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,

Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace:

All these you eat at Terré's tavern,

In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

This is all very well, but it is vague. Even at its best, compare bouillabaisse with Gumbo *filé*. The Choctaws in Louisiana pound the young leaves of the sassafras to powder, which is refined through a sieve. This is the prelude. Then comes one large, tender chicken, a ham bone, not very bare, two tablespoonfuls of butter, one bay leaf, three sprigs of parsley, three

dozen oysters, one large onion, one sprig of thyme, two quarts of oyster juice, two quarts of boiling water, one half pod of red pepper without the seeds; salt and cayenne, as you wish. You take two spoonfuls of *filé* and drop them slowly into the pot of boiling Gumbo—the pot resting in hot water—for it is a vicious error to warm the Gumbo after the *filé* has been added. The rice in a separate dish must be boiled so that each grain stands apart. What would Thackeray not have written about this, had he taken the trouble to understand its value? Bouillabaisse—bah!

It is well known that Dante Alighieri left a recipe for the confection of spaghetti; it is in Latin on a flyleaf on one of the first editions of "De Monarchia." And it is also known that his estrangement from Gemma, his wife, as well as the digestive difficulty which produced the "Inferno," was caused by her objection to the use of the onion, instead of garlic in the sauce. If such a seeming trifle can produce such alarming results, why should not the novelists of the present, disregarding the bad, old practices of the past, learn that the food of their heroes and heroines is worthy of careful study?



## THE RETURN

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

"THE city for the Winter—!" Thus you say,  
Back from the glaring, shallow gilt and white  
Of some poor Summer town in tinsel light,  
Mimicking freedom in a landlocked bay:  
"The city for the Winter—crowded way  
Where Progress jostles forward in her might;  
Where day stalks fearless through the blazing night,  
And night's unshamed devices smile at day."

Not so for me. Give me the wild unrest  
Of ocean reaches gray, the Winter wood,  
Nature in snowy anger—she whose lust  
Of torture makes your toil a sorry jest,  
Who set a desert where Tyre's towers stood  
And still shall smile when all your towns are dust.

# THE ETERNAL MASCULINE

By Edna Kenton

GRANNIS lighted another cigarette, and leaned back to resume his curious staring at his companion. Since he drained his Benedictine he had smoked a half-dozen, rapidly, with no lingering delight. Up to this evening he had been taking the strain of the week very calmly indeed. There had been no real reason why he should not. His was not an erratic temperament, and Theresa, more than most of her unequable sex, was of composed and balanced character. Then, too, neither of them was very young. Grannis owned to forty years, and Theresa, within another ten days, would touch the woman-dreaded line of thirty.

But Grannis, conscious of his own excitement tonight, wondered at her calmness, marveled that fully half her Benedictine still lay heavily within her glass, stared at her because she spoke with a voice as untroubled as if her wedding hour were three years instead of three days distant, and stared the more because of what she said. He gazed into her clear lakes of eyes, and wondered that a woman who looked so young could be so old in experience and thought.

The evening had been a leisurely one, with long waits between courses. They had come to this quaint garden café tonight because here, two years before, they had first seen each other. Admittance here was by introduction—no sign swung before the door—and so, since almost everyone knew everyone, Grannis knew the young artist who had brought Theresa Inglis that night, and after staring at her all evening, he had stopped at last by Roberts's

table and forced the introduction. Then had followed two long delightful years of comradeship, and later betrothal, which was so soon to culminate in marriage.

Grannis had never known a woman just like her, and from the first she fascinated him. He was an architect, and so had been brought into contact with various art cliques, but he had never penetrated far into bohemia, and socially knew but little of women outside his own fine class. Until she was twenty years old Theresa Inglis had known no other environment than his own. For the last ten years she had been a woman of the cosmopolitan world, with a profession. Goldsmithing, taken up as mere avocation, became the strong means to an end, and that end, livelihood. Sudden death and financial wreck had swept away her home, and she had her choice between living on the obvious charity of uncongenial relatives or making her own way.

She lived for a year therefore on her available principal while she worked with a Belgian master in metals. Then she came home to conquer by sheer originality of design and beauty of workmanship. She lived alone and was her own master. She had had her minor love affairs, but she had not known the power of love until she met Grannis, and watched half-fearfully her love for him develop. She saw early his fastidiousness, and she often wondered how he seemed to find so little to criticize in her and her mode of life. She smoothed over none of its freedoms; abated none of her merry conviction of the absolute



equality before Nature of man and woman; had surrendered none of her liberties. She was not an aggressive woman, and had no fancy for strident freedoms, but she believed in her right to live her life her own way, and acted decorously upon that belief.

And her freedoms and her decorous liberties had amused Grannis and enthralled him. It had been a marvelous two years for him, quite as much as for the girl.

He tossed the charred end of his seventh cigarette from him, conscious of a slight irritation at the sight of Theresa's calm hands lying loosely clasped on the table; feeling a feverish, womanish longing that she might share his nervous strain. He did not know from what source the fit of nerves was sprung, until his eye fell suddenly upon the ring she wore, his ring, whose design he and she had worked out together, and which her old Belgian master had fashioned wondrously, and in it he read with astonishing swiftness the riddle of his strange excitement. It was not the nearness of Theresa, but the nearness of Marriage. For the first time he yielded assent to the theory which Theresa had advanced over their coffee, and which she was still discussing. This nervousness was essentially womanish, this absurd, reasonless shrinking from the yoke which time and immemorial custom—perhaps Nature in the very fact of her—has made of marriage. Perhaps Theresa was right in her assertion that men and women are essentially the same. Yet he knew he did not believe it. And he knew she did.

She raised her eyes to his after a long pause, and uttered a slow sentence. Grannis watched her sip her Benedictine. Then he spoke sharply.

"No, no!" he said.

"But why not?" she asked coolly.

"There is honor," he said curtly. "Man's honor."

The girl laughed lightly. "We women don't look at it that way."

"I know you don't," Grannis answered somberly. "You jilt right and

left, and boast of it. It is your prerogative. But a man——"

"I'm not talking of jilting, you know," Theresa said slowly. "I'm talking of employing common sense in questions of honor. If I didn't love you, and found it out tonight, you'd rather have the truth. You would, Eric!" The statement leaped out at him full.

"Naturally I should, Tess," he said. "There's a little too much of both of us to make life worth living together unless we both——"

"Then how less guilty would you be if you found out so late and let things drift—allowed me to find out after it is so fearfully too late?"

"Dear, you are so charmingly extreme," murmured Grannis. "That thing is impossible."

"Impossible?" Her dark eyes rested on him inquiringly, with sweet reasonableness.

"For this reason if no other," explained Grannis. "That so long as woman is the pursued and man the pursuer he cannot cast off lightly that which——"

"It is only bare justice to the woman if he finds it out, and she does not." She laughed a little at him as he sat across from her, half-smiling, half-frowning.

"I felt revolt at all this long ago," she said at last. "It began when I was reading Ouida. Never have I loved a book as I adored 'Under Two Flags,' yet I could have slapped Bertie Cecil to sleep for his nonsensical shielding of that little scab brother of his at the cost of everything——"

"Save honor only!" amended Grannis slowly.

"Save a whipped cur of a boy," said the girl warmly. "How I raved against her heroes."

"And adored them," said Grannis calmly. Miss Inglis laughed.

For a few moments they sat silent, Grannis smoking furiously, as he had smoked all evening.

"At least we are not children, you and I," she said musingly. "As for pursuer and pursued——" She blushed

brightly and broke off. "How strange that hour was!" she added.

Grannis smiled as he watched her face. "We were really engaged long before," he reminded her, for an odd second fearful of her self-reproach over the self-confession most women would not have made. "After all, neither of us said a word, dear."

She raised her eyes with a look that was in all ways lovely in its frankness and straightness of gaze. In its clear directness it was almost boyish. And it was identically the same look, lacking the high sacredness of mounting passion, which had precipitated—Grannis owned it brutally—their betrothal.

Somehow this evening Grannis could not rise to the level of that look. He stared instead straight ahead of him, toward a table in the centre of the garden, which he knew instantly for Theresa's table that night two years ago, and at the girl, with her escort, sitting there.

After that they sat in silence, she calm and quiet; he quiet, but not calm. He was not staring too obviously, yet he had not missed a motion of the flower-like girl who sat at that centre table, talking eagerly, glancing bird-like about the rough, historic place. Stray words floated across to Grannis, her questions, her escort's answers. To these last she yielded sweet deference, and to the man himself all the unconscious flattery of her inborn recognition of masculine supremacy—Grannis gazed at her till her face was burned on his memory; until her face lost indeed its concrete quality, and became to him abstract, primitive Womanhood. He saw in her a beautiful reversion to type; what women were before they began to talk of equalities and standards, before they had gained power to do other than look at men shyly, fleetingly, shrinkingly; instead of always frankly, straightly. . . .

Grannis flung his cigarette from him as it burned his fingers, and glanced quickly at Theresa. She was sitting, still calm and quiet, gazing serenely through the trees to the starlit sky. Again her composure irritated him beyond measure. For the moment it

seemed outrageously masculine—his own mental state contemptibly feminine. He spoke hurriedly:

"Come, Tess. We have been here over three hours."

She came back slowly from contemplation of the heavens, looking at him with dreamy eyes.

"Dear Eric, what of it!" she said. "And what matters it if we stay three more!"

Grannis muttered something about unfinished work, and helped her into her coat, striving always to keep his eyes from that centre table where sat that gracious embodiment of unmodern womanhood—he would remember the girl's face as long as he lived, entirely unaffected as he was by her personality. He was simply mightily impressed with the simplicity of ancient marriage compared to its modern development. Further than that he tried not to think.

## II

YET thoughts crowded on him that night, after he left Theresa, after that half-hour of lingering, after he had kissed her tenderly, waiting eagerly for some touch of fear, some traditional shrinking from the nearness of her marriage hour which more than ever, it seemed to him, women, because they were women, must feel. Yet she had been only frankly joyous, gloriously uplifted.

He let himself into his office at midnight. For an hour he had walked the streets, filled with hot questions, contemptible warrings. When he had come at last to his apartment house he had remembered staggeringly that his lease upon it was surrendered. It seemed to him that he had no longer any right to enter his rooms, and he turned from them swiftly, and walked block after block until he reached the skyscraper wherein his offices nestled.

There he passed the night walking through the velvety blackness of his two rooms; then sinking wearily into a chair before the window from where he watched the swinging stars above the scurrying clouds, until pressing

thoughts drove him to his feet again. He went down for breakfast early, and ate it at a cheap restaurant very near, which he had never patronized before, because of its blackboard sign and its dirty-aproned waiters. But this morning he ate ravenously the bacon and eggs and soggy biscuit the unshorn man brought him, and he drank the bitter coffee eagerly, taking its bitterness for strength. His check came to twenty cents, and he left half-a-dollar in the man's hand, and walked quickly out. He stayed all day in his office. At seven o'clock he went again to the same place for dinner, pausing on his way to send a telegram to Theresa, saying briefly that business kept him downtown. As he devoured the overdone roast and the underdone potatoes, he wondered if she might have any suspicion—and laughed at himself. She was not a suspicious woman, however far from a man's fool she might be. She trusted him infinitely, he knew that. After dinner he wandered about dark side streets for several hours, loath to go back to his office, where the great decision still pressed for settlement. He must decide tonight.

It was not far from midnight when he found himself back in his office, with its doors locked against the world. He should have been sick with fatigue, but tonight he felt no weariness. He sank into a chair ready to face at last the issue of this struggle.

He wondered if, after all, Theresa's views of honor were correct. He had no doubt of the common sensible end to this. It seemed to him that he had never loved her, never. He felt that he could be her devoted friend for all eternity, if only he did not have to call her wife. But calling her that—how could he deceive her for an hour! As she had said, she was no child. Things which in an innocent girl's mind could arouse no suspicion, Theresa would see through in a flash of time—she had no false shyness to interfere with her clearness of vision, no false modesties and ignorances to blind her.

Grannis groaned bitterly. If he

only might have known her ten years before! A wave of self-pity swept over him. Marriage for them both could have been so much simpler, would have held so many more chances for happiness. As it was . . . as it was. . . .

When the clock in the square below him struck two he reached for a pen, and began to write rapidly. He had dreaded inexpressibly the writing of this letter, always granted he would send it, but once begun, the words followed limpidly from his pen's point. It began baldly, without address:

I sent you the telegram because I could not see you until I had decided. I am still in doubt that even modern conditions permit this letter to a man's honor, but taking your base of common sense as a reasoning base, I have no doubt of the wisdom of telling you frankly, nakedly, that I am certain our marriage, if it takes place, will be a disastrous mistake. You will feel—I should feel were the case reversed—that it has taken a long time to bring my courage to the sticking-point, that this late confession is inexcusable, that I should have known this long ago, and should have spared us both these final weeks. This revelation did not come to me till last night, after dinner, during that last hour there. The piercing doubt had come earlier—forgive me if I say your dictum anent mutual confession crystallized it. So tonight I am meeting you on the plane of equality which you laid down. If I am hiding behind that excuse, I am sorry. I am acutely aware of my great need for excuse. I do know this: that if there was one chance to keep this change of heart from you, I should take it, but it would be hopeless. You will never forgive me for telling you this, but you would never forgive me if I took you and left you ignorant.

I hesitate to attempt reasons why, yet it is due you that I try, even if I fail, as I certainly shall. The fault lies either with me or with our too modern age. Marriage is complex as it never was before. Economic conditions—we have talked them over a hundred times; until last night the arguments meant nothing to me. But last night they rose in solid phalanx, and I marveled that you could sit there, so calm, serene, so free from inward doubt. If I say more you will misunderstand me and yourself, and it will avail us nothing.

I might add all things about my genuine affection for you, but it would seem insult, and that is farthest from my mind. But I must add this. I have told you before marriage what you would have surely discovered for yourself after it—having told

you, the rest lies in your hands. It is late to change plans. I owe you whatever you wish—you will have only to telegraph me here.

Grannis laid down his pen. His lips were pallid. "You cad, you cad!" he whispered. "You cad!" He did not attempt to read the letter. He knew that if he read it he should never send it, and he was at least convinced of the honest common sense of it, if of nothing else. At last he thrust it savagely into an envelope, and went into the corridor. As he watched its zigzag flashing down the mail-chute he would have given worlds to recall it. But suddenly his weariness overcame him. He staggered back, and threw himself prone upon his lounge. It had been forty-eight hours since he had slept.

When he woke it was noon. He went to his lavatory, walking like a drunken man. It took five minutes of cold-water douching to clear his brain of its fog. He went to his outer office. No telegram lay in the litter of mail, nor did one come that day. That night he slept there.

When Theresa's letter came the next morning he held it for several minutes before he opened it. He saw that it was brief, for the envelope held but one sheet with the outer page blank. As he looked he remembered sharply that this was to have been his wedding day.

He sat down at last by his desk, reaching out methodically for his paper-knife. At a glance he saw that all she had written was compressed into a third of a page's space:

You found courage of your convictions, late though they—or it—came to you. You did not expect a telegram today. You knew there is but one end to this. To the few who knew I have written that the marriage is indefinitely postponed. The polite fiction serves, and the matter has become a closed incident between us.

He stared thoughtfully at the firm signature. The letter had begun without formal address, but her name was signed with dignity and serenity. A second reading revealed no more. The letter might signify a breaking heart, the refined expression of blessed relief, serene approval or the ultimate ex-

pression of contempt. He tried to recall the wording of his letter to her, and failed, and was at once glad and sorry. He debated whether he should leave town as he had planned to do, or stay on and work, and he decided on the latter course.

He made his work all-engrossing. Oddly enough he met none of the few friends who knew of their projected marriage. A month later, by mere accident, he learned that Theresa was in Naples. As time wore on, the memory of his letter, which stabbed him sharply at first, grew fainter and more faint. She had asked it of him, he told himself, and if ever betrothal was equal before High Heaven, theirs had been. If ever a man had the right to send a woman such a message at such a time, his had been the right—further than that he would not think. She had given him the right. If he could have deceived her he would not have taken it, of that he assured himself stubbornly. But her frank comradeship was the cause of his revolt and his confession. He knew himself to be no low tyrant, but his distaste for marriage under modern conditions still held him. Flashing memories of Theresa would come to him stabbingly. But with her face came instantly the vision of that other, that child-woman who had faced him for half an hour, the embodiment of old-time womanliness and unproblematic wifehood. With such contrast he saw plainly that he was only primitive man, demanding for his helpmate primitive woman, no glorious, modern, self-developed goddess. He had no desire that women should be slaves; slavery was a part of civilization. His ideal went back to the beginning of things, when men and women were alike supreme, but with spheres coinciding on unclashing planes. It was the modern upheaval which had spelled disaster for him, the colliding orbits, the swaying, unbalanced planes—it was this confusion against which he had fallen in spirit. It was this clear concept which had suddenly slain his passion for Theresa Inglis. For Theresa spelled Modernity. His revulsion against her

had been revulsion in all ways, mental, physical, moral so far as it involved the casting aside of all time-honored creeds and codes, and it had not been passing impulse, because he had never regretted present conditions. His letter indeed—but what was done was done. *Che sarà, sarà!*

### III

GRANNIS, finding that his cabman had made a mistake in the street, cursed wearily, and then walked on in the blinding snowstorm. He had said Fifty-seventh, and the fool had deposited him ten blocks below, and was already lost in the whirling snow. He was doubly furious now that he had not turned down Carson's studio vaudeville, in spite of Carson's opportunity.

He was late, of course. He had known he would be. Carson met him at the door.

"Just tiptoe this way," Carson hissed. "It's 'Rags and Tatters'—here's a programme."

Grannis almost smiled—fussy little Carson was such a delicious fool. But he tiptoed in and took a seat far back in the second room. Rags and Tatters were doing a poor stunt very badly, and Grannis became enamoured of his dark corner, especially after a juggler came on. He loathed jugglers tricks, and it was during that turn that his gratitude for darkness rose in prayers, for he had looked beyond him upon Theresa Inglis.

His first feeling was utter shame. His next—but it was gone too quickly for classifying. Of course he was glad that she looked so serene and happy. He was so glad of that thing that he moved further into his shadows. She had not seen him yet—perhaps she need not. He wondered how she would meet him; would she speak or deliberately not speak, or merely not see him?

For the first time in months, so quickly had his busy life filled his thoughts, he remembered that small

garden café, and the night when he had looked last on her. And for the first time in months also he recalled the flower-faced girl who had embodied his every owned and hidden ideal of the Eternal Womanly. He had tried to tell Theresa in his letter what had really wrought the change, and he could not—she would never have separated the concrete woman from the abstract conviction. And it had not been the girl herself. He had hardly thought of her again, with her small, sweet face, her deep blue eyes set wide apart—making of her for all time a wondering child—her soft, brown hair, and her innocent, innocent mouth. She had only made startlingly clear to him all that woman is meant to be by inexorable Nature against which it is useless for man or woman to combat.

As the patter of applause continued Grannis looked up at the vacant stage, and then glanced at his programme. No wonder Carson's delighted audience was applauding! It was rather bold of little Carson, in truth, and the atmosphere was alive with knowingness and innuendo. Evidently all the world had heard, as he had heard, of little Carson's "angelic" rôle to this supple-limbed child of the lower slums, the "Favorita" who had headlined at music-hall after music-hall that Winter, and whom her "angel" had chosen to bring here, now, to dance as only Favorita of all the short-skirted sisterhood in town that Winter could dance. Grannis joined amusedly in the applause. Everyone knew Carson was a fool, but if he chose . . .

As the applause grew wilder Grannis, his hands tense, leaned forward and stared furiously at the small, slender-limbed, deep blue-eyed, brown-haired girl, who pirouetted before them. Her eyes were still wide apart; she still looked like a wondering child, but her mouth, with its practiced smears of rouge, no longer looked innocent. Grannis stared, filled with sheer disgust and fury. This creature had been for months his dream of Womanhood, this girl who for years had fed

at the trough and grown sleek on its slopes!

He half-turned his head—he could not help it. And as the girl began her too suggestive dance Theresa Inglis turned her head also, and for the first time saw him. Their eyes locked looks. Then slowly, gravely, she inclined her head and turned away.

Grannis sat back, in a turmoil beside which all his other confusions of mind had been fleeting sensations. The cad he was, the cad he was! The cad, the cad!

By-and-bye he, too, watched the dancer. He saw little Carson down in front, smiling fatuously. He saw a glance of Favorita's directed at the grinning fool. Once he dared to look again upon Theresa.

He did not leave until after he met her. Very few people had known of their projected wedding day, so there was really no curious eye upon them when Theresa Inglis, in accord with a long-lived resolve, turned toward him at last and held out her hand.

Grannis, astounded, hesitated long enough to embarrass a woman less poised and intuitive than Theresa. But bitter as the experience had been, she had been sure enough of Grannis to take his amazing letter for truth so far as he was able to frame it. She had known it was no deliberate jilting of her; she had been just enough to remember every word she had said which granted him the right to do that thing; and if, after the deed, she found that clamorous instinct drowned calm reason and protested hotly against his act, she told herself she must stand by her words, however untrue they seemed to her now. Therefore, cutting Grannis openly was out of the question. That would concede insult where none had been intended, and where the act itself had been invited. Studious ignoring was no solution. And recognition only remained. It soothed her to see his patent confusion thereat.

He touched her hand at last, murmuring he knew not what. The meeting was very brief, and neither prolonged it. But it had come—that was

the main point—it had come to them at last. As Grannis felt the cold wind whip the flying snow against his face—he left as soon as he left Theresa—he knew at last that he had been waiting for this thing through all the months, that it was the doubt which had weighed on him unconsciously, the doubt! How graciously she had recognized him—how could he have doubted for an instant that she would do anything else, and what woman save Theresa could have done it so finely, so—finely! She had done the only thing, with superb finesse. He felt a thrill of pride for her and in her. The blinding snow stung him mercilessly as he walked on, and he did not know it. For there came back on him, mightier than the storm, purer and rarer than any passion he had ever known, his love for Theresa. He had been afraid of problems—it had been because he had not loved enough. What problem could stand against the strength of this love sweeping through him, save only the one he himself had made? Of all the women in the world he had no right ever again to tell this woman that he loved her. Other men might sue, time and again, unhumiliated, for the love of the women they loved. But his right to sue for this woman was lost to him forever. And by his own act! He had assumed a prerogative which was not his, and in taking it had surrendered an otherwise inalienable right.

That night also Grannis spent downtown, in his lonely offices.

#### IV

THREE evenings later he walked up the side street to Theresa's apartment. His face was white. He caught the faint gleam of a lamp from her windows, and a strain from a Chopin prelude. He did not ring the bell below, but walked up to the second floor and knocked.

The music ceased abruptly. There followed a faint stir of skirts; then the door opened, and Theresa Inglis stood



within it. For a few seconds she stared without speaking.

"You!" she said at last. Her voice was ice, but her eyes were flame. As the door narrowed Grannis stepped deliberately within and shut it behind him.

"You have the right of might," Theresa said insolently. She moved toward the inner room with a carriage as insolent as her voice. "Do come in," she said over her shoulder. "I'm not in the mood for high heroics, and I sha'n't need them—to get you out—when I choose."

She reseated herself at her piano, trying to control the fierce anger that leaped within her at first sight of him tonight. When he entered at last she did not turn. How did he dare—how did he dare! Whatever the past had or had not held, this at least was insult. He had caught her unawares. This daring call, it meant nothing but insult if it did not mean renewal, and that plea from him was pure insult. He had forever forfeited the right to plead again. Not to know his mind once—so much might be pardoned him. But to vacillate, to desire a thing and then disdain it, and to desire it again—swift tremors of anger shook her.

"If there was another place," said Grannis slowly, "to tell you the few things I must say, I should not be here. I have no right—that is why I came up without announcement, and in without invitation. I came to say that nothing can excuse the deed I did last year. Nothing."

"You were free," said Theresa slowly. "I invited it—you had full permission."

"That is the least excuse of all," said Grannis. "I had sought you—I had chosen you—had asked for you and gained you—I had no choice but to abide by that choice."

"Our betrothal was equal—I precipitated it." Her fingers touched the keys lightly.

Grannis smiled briefly. "The woman always precipitates it," he said curtly. "We wait for the moment, and the moment always depends on the

woman. It was bound to come—I loved you."

"We will not speak of love," said the girl calmly.

"No," said Grannis. "We will speak no more of love, but of that caddish letter, and——"

"I am very angry that you are here, Eric," said Theresa swiftly. "But really that letter was not caddish. If it were you would not be talking here, now."

"Let me speak," said Grannis, still curtly. "It was the sight of another woman which did it all. I was in a nervous, damnable mood. I was trying to answer all the problems of all marriage that night, instead of letting them work themselves out, with you to help me. Life would have taught me much, if I had not gone mad. But I saw a girl—how can I tell you—can you understand when I say she embodied the lurking ideal every man has of every woman?—something to protect, to cherish, to defend. Tess, you can't get the standpoint, I dare say—but, for the moment, she stood for all that you, with your successes, your philosophies, were not. And in the end I took you at your own valuation, and shirked the problem. And three nights ago—is it bathos?—I saw that girl, my embodiment of Ideals, dancing before Carson's guests, his mistress now—before him, any man's. Yes, laugh. I laughed, too, before I realized all that my foolery has brought upon me.

"Yes," he said after a moment. "It is a humorous thing, and I am a humorous fool. I am like all my brothers, and I have walked with Humiliation for three days, therefor. But you—you are Woman, neither more nor less, in spite of your modern trappings. You have blamed yourself all you can for my fall, but in your soul you pity and despise me because I swerved from the path of decency and chivalry that multiple life through the ages has trodden clean for every man to follow. You gave me no cause, and I threw you back to face the jibes the world will have for all time for the woman refused at the altar. You are



nothing less than Woman, and you know it now, Tess. And I—I am something less than a decent man, with nothing for consolation save the memory of this confession I have forced upon you. This is all."

She had been looking into his eyes with her old, straight gaze. But now it wavered. "You are nothing less than Woman—you know it now." Ah, did she not! In these last months she had talked with her soul, face to face. Her soul's truths crowded her brain now.

"Except this"—he turned back to her sharply—"that the madness is over, the obsession laid upon me by a wanton woman's chance purity of face.

And you—the woman I knew so well, to misunderstand so wickedly—you have the holy place—I can say no more without insult. And God knows I did not come here tonight for that."

Not until she heard the click of the latch under his hand did she rise swiftly from her place and go after him into the small hall.

"Yes, I am nothing more than a woman," she said. "And I might never have learned it if we had been married that day, and had tried then to live our assertive lives together. Ah, Eric, you will never say it. For once the woman has the right—marry me!" she said.



## A SOLILOQUY

By Tom Masson

**I** AM desperately hungry. The waiter said that steak would take twelve minutes.

Well, I suppose I can wait. I ought to have come in here an hour sooner. I didn't realize how the time had slipped by.

Here comes the boy with the bread. Nice-looking bread, but there isn't a bit of nourishment in it.

I wouldn't touch that bread for anything. I understand now how a shipwrecked mariner feels on a desert island when starving.

There is one thing about it, if that bread doesn't contain any nourishment, I might eat a barrel of it and it wouldn't do me any good.

I wonder when that steak's coming. It ought to be here in six minutes. I am glad that I am not eating that bread. Some men would have eaten it all. Not I! I wouldn't do a thing that I knew wasn't absolutely right. Touch that bread? Never!

I wonder whether it is French bread. I'll just taste it and see.

That is the best bread I ever ate. Great Scott, but I'm hungry! Nice-looking butter. Looks fresh; is fresh.

Bread and butter make a great combination. I don't know anything better than bread and butter, after all. Curse that steak! I know it will never come. I have given up all hope of ever seeing it.

Bully bread! I wonder why that boy only brought one pat of butter. That is just like this restaurant. Meaner than dirt. Here, boy, more butter. (That bread's almost gone.)

Waiter, bring me some more bread. Get me twice as much as I had before. I must have bread. Never was so hungry in my life. Never tasted such bread. Never tasted such butter. Greatest thing in the world. I am lost to all sense of shame. I can't get enough bread and butter.

Hello, what's this? Steak? Take it away, you fool! How can I eat a steak when I am sitting here full of bread and butter?

# WHERE DREAMS MERGE

By Johnson Morton

WHEN she could see the carriage no longer, Mrs. Stillman turned and walked slowly back to the veranda. In her absence its cool recesses had been chosen for the scene of a belated breakfast. Her younger son crooked his length of flanneled legs over a steamer-chair, on a table by his side eggs and coffee waited, while he regarded critically, one by one, a bundle of golf-sticks in his lap. He put his arm about her as she bent over him and touched her lips to his.

"Good old mater," he laughed lightly. "No need to offer you any breakfast, I suppose! You must have been up for hours. I heard you at daybreak in Larry's room, talking, talking. What do you two find to say to each other! I suppose you've been seeing him off at the gate. Wasn't he late in starting? How is the old chap today?"

Mrs. Stillman did not reply directly. She had drawn a chair to the table and was pouring out a cup of coffee.

"Come, your breakfast is getting cold, Arthur," she spoke briskly. "It's after eleven o'clock."

Her son put down the golf-sticks to take the cup from her hand. In the morning light even his careless attention remarked the pallor of his mother's face.

"Mater, you look fagged out! It's Larry again!" His tone touched disapproval. "Why do you worry so about him? Why don't you let him alone? He'll pull through all right, but he's got to do the work himself. He can't lean on you forever. I've no sort of patience with him."

Mrs. Stillman covered her eyes with her hand.

"Oh, don't, Arthur! I know perfectly well what you think, what everybody thinks but myself, and today, somehow, I mind it more than ever. I'm tired, Arthur." She took her hand from her eyes and looked at him closely. "Larry had that dream again last night."

"And called you?"

"Yes, dear, of course. The impression it left was very vivid. He could not get to sleep afterward. I was awake, too!" she added quickly, as if in apology.

"It's all nonsense."

Arthur put down his cup and leaned on the arm of his mother's chair. He took both her hands in his.

"I'm getting terribly tired of this, mater. I can't see why Larry's recurrent dream should upset us all every time he has it. You say it's a pleasant one. Why doesn't it do him good and make him happy, instead of leaving him so used up that he has to take it out of you?"

"Oh, I can't discuss it, Arthur. It has a strange effect on him. Your brother is an unusual person; he feels things and sees things that the rest of us miss."

"Don't forget that Larry has nervous prostration, mater! That will account for everything. He'll come out of it, but he can't be helped by sympathy. Didn't Dr. Clipston tell you so this Spring? I must say he's taking his time over it, though!"

Arthur had risen with the last word. His air of finality roused his mother

to a small sense of annoyance. She laughed a little bitterly.

"That's all you know about it!" she cried. "The state of nervous prostration that followed his terrible illness no longer exists. His health is good, he looks better than he has for a long time; indeed, he is almost his old self. But, I repeat, Arthur, Larry's is an unusual nature and his five years' experience has produced one extraordinary effect. You notice that he gives no real attention to anything. He won't go back to work; he reads no more; he refuses to write; he never touches the piano; he has forgotten his drawing; he cares for nobody. All his interest seems suspended, as if he were waiting for something to happen, something extraneous. He is looking for realization without effort. I can't explain it, dear, but I know that he feels it himself, from something that he has said to me. Oh, if I could only understand what it is that he wants and get it for him! If I could give his life a start! He is like a perfectly adjusted machine standing idle, but ready, needing just a touch to put it into motion and use. Do you know, sometimes I think that this dream of Larry's has possessed him! It seems to hold, in his mind, more of the quality of reality than all our care, our anxiety, our love!"

She leaned back in a moment's silence. Arthur had lighted a cigarette. He stood on the step, erect and graceful, his golf-bag over his shoulder. Something in the poise of his vigorous beauty, in the very frankness of his physical self-sufficiency, caught his mother's attention and changed her mood. The sense of contrast, which had ever veered despite her conscientious impartiality to the advantage of his elder brother, turned suddenly to his. Her woman's inherent sense of dependence clung to him greedily; he seemed so restful, so protective; he smacked of youth so superbly. Mrs. Stillman's forehead freed itself of lines as she regarded him; on her lips rested a smile that grew almost to a laugh when she spoke.

"Come, let's not talk about this any more!" she cried. "Arthur, I don't believe that *you* ever had a dream in your life or a nerve in your body! Hurry off now, you child, and play, and when you must eat again come back to me—only don't let luncheon drag itself to tea-time. Remember that we've a guest coming."

Then she ran to him suddenly, as he turned the corner of the house, and hung to his arm with an impulse of girlish roguishness that she had never outlived, her face pressed against his coat-sleeve.

"Here's one thing that, maybe, you *can* understand, you splendid stupid. It's a confession. Don't you want to hear it? Well, then, listen. I really believe that I had something in my mind when I made Larry take that long drive to the Junction to meet Marian!"

Arthur's laugh was a roar of delight. He caught her around the waist and held her at arm's length.

"I knew that there was a plot at the bottom of this," he cried. "I see through you now, mater! Oh, you clever little schemer, you matchmaker, you!"

## II

LAWRENCE STILLMAN was glad when his horses had cleared the last hill beyond the village and started on the shady road that followed the river down the valley. It was a relief to be out of sight of even the friendly faces of the townsfolk, out of sound of the very greetings that they called pleasantly to him as he passed. Here was the flickering sunlight through a tangle of green overhead, here the murmur of waters clattering sharply through stony shallows or dropping sonorously into deeper pools, and over all the restful consciousness of being alone.

He had demurred the day before when his mother had suggested this long morning drive to meet the Western train.

"Why doesn't this Miss Naylor of yours wait at the Junction an hour and

come up on the branch line, like anyone else?" he had asked. "I don't know her. I'll never be able to recognize her unless she wears a red rose or carries a folded newspaper, and if by some miracle I do find her, what shall I have to say to her? I'm sure to bore her to death on a twelve-mile drive. She won't care to talk to an invalid. Send Arthur, mater, if someone must go. He's met the paragon before somewhere, and it's a deal more in his line anyhow. I tell you, I'm not up to it."

In the morning, however, with the listlessness that marked the beginning of each new day, he had consented in an ungracious silence that troubled his mother far more than his previous excited refusals. Some vague recognition of this, as an emotion other than his own, touched Stillman's thoughts, as he drove along, making them turn to an unaccustomed objectivity, though never uprooting them from the strong subjective habit of their growth. He was conscious of an impulse of pity, sharp but momentary, that for the once did not concern himself, a faint stir of comprehension of what might be his mother's point of view, a possible impression of a personal obligation evaded, a hint, maybe, of regret. These suggestions flickered like feeble flashes of distant lightning against the ominous clouds that hung about his mind, and then went out, leaving the darkness deeper than before. With them died as well, even the subtle effect of the natural beauty around him—the mottled Summer sky; the cool shadows under the trees that waved against it; the pulse of life in roadside bank, and gray, perfumed hayfields beyond. He heeded no more the blended voices of vagrant wind and constant river. Eyes and ears went blind and deaf to all things save the introspection of his own brain, which seemed to seize each sense and turn it back upon his thoughts, exhausting every impression with the wearisome lack of result that he knew so well. Uppermost now, at the moment lay the semblance of the dream that had recurred through so many nights and colored so many days. His

mind fell upon it and fastened there. He bowed his head upon his breast and yielded to the passion, as one long accustomed to obey. Then he closed his eyes, his hands loosened responsively on the reins, and the horses, conscious of a slackened control, bore him swiftly down the valley.

### III

LAWRENCE STILLMAN's soul was the soul of the poet, the dumb poet whose silence held the intensity of song, whose expression, denied some one great outlet that belonged to it by right, filtered through the smaller channels of appreciation, criticism, comprehension.

His had been a solitary childhood. A certain wistful self-consciousness had separated him from his kind; an overdeveloped capacity for feeling that never assimilated with the careless companionship of youth. A shadowy understanding of his loneliness had early touched the heart of his mother, who, in her own more easily accommodated nature, had perhaps felt a stir of a kindred individuality. Her sympathy produced solicitude that at first strove to counteract tendencies which, if persisted in, she knew from her own well-gained experiences of life, made only for isolation and disappointment; yet it ended by offering, in place of the structural strengthening that his nature needed, merely a succession of pleasant compensations for the dull routine of the education made obligatory by the wish of a self-willed father. With a tenacity in its way as strong as her husband's own, she had insisted on the boy's study of the various forms of art which tempted him from time to time. He learned to play the piano, to sing. She hung his drawings on the walls of her bedroom and praised his verses to friendly audiences. Meanwhile, Lawrence went through college creditably—for he had a certain gift of application which triumphed over a lack of interest—and was about to enter the law-school when the elder Stillman died. Then the mother and

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son, recognizing the crucial importance of the moment, had held a long consultation over the latter's future. Mrs. Stillman had urged immediate abandonment of the plan, but Lawrence, with a complicating sense of loyalty and of obligation, made all the stronger by the fact that a personal pressure no longer existed, even perhaps awake to a vague realization of some lack of vitality and direction in his own artistic impulse, had insisted that his father's wishes be carried out.

At the end of his law course he had been admitted to the Bar and had gone into an excellent office, where for a time he made progress which, if not noteworthy, was at least good. In his mother's attitude he was aware of a certain satisfaction tinged, however, with disappointment that he had chosen so usual a path; in his own, though he strove manfully to hide his feelings even from himself, he found a reversal of the situation.

A year later, the wearying round of uninspired labor, of cumulative discontent, of concealed unhappiness, exacted a penalty. Lawrence Stillman fell ill of a fever, and after it had run its course, awoke, depleted physically, to a sense of weakened nerve power, baffling in its subtle poignancy, that seemed to close his conscious life and to substitute for it a shadowed existence destitute of all remembered qualities save misery. In vain was a period of complete rest in a sanatorium, equally futile a trip to Europe with his younger brother, whose exuberance of spirits, failing to act as an expected stimulus and inspiration, awoke instead a jealous resentment in the elder. Of no effect were solicitude and care. It was only in the Springtime of the present year that his mother's watchful eye had noticed a faint improvement. Lawrence had, for the first time in months, expressed a definite wish, a good sign, the doctors told her, and in quick obedience to it the little family of three had come to the quiet Vermont town where he had been in babyhood, and of whose charm he had always held a lingering memory.

"Take me to a high place, mother," he had begged, "where I can look off and see no end. You know that I love to be above the world. I am haunted by the thought. I close my eyes and something very like Norwood is always before them; a village on a hilltop, mother, with a strong wind blowing over it and a cool, free sky where far-off clouds float to a wide horizon. Take me to Norwood, mother; somehow I feel that I shall be better there."

At first the change had seemed to fulfil Lawrence's hope. The days brought a faint revival of interest and the nights promised sleep. His mother's courage stirred with his own. To both it seemed that the turn might be in sight, and together they raised their eyes tentatively to the future, when there came a sudden reaction. Lawrence grew restless, depressed, and finally hopeless.

"There is no use trying any more," he told his mother, as she sat by his bedside in the dumb grayness before a dawn. "You need not hold on to me any longer. I have given myself up and I am going to pieces, I tell you. There is nothing left for me; I am a failure; I cannot even get well. I cannot *do* a single thing. I can't even *think*. I can only feel, *feel* everything; the sunshine, the darkness, a sudden turn of a road, an unexpected presence; the tone of a voice, the meaning behind a word, the things you think and dare not say, the things I myself dare not even think! Yes; everything—sights and sounds that I ought just to see and to hear—I *feel* them, I tell you. It will kill me. I'm not able to bear it. Why won't you understand, mother, why can't I make you? There's nothing that doesn't in some way touch me, I tell you, and leave an impression. Sometimes it tangles itself about me like a horrible wet cloud, and again it cuts deep into me with the sharpness of a knife. For God's sake, mother, why don't you do something to stop it? Take me away, if you love me, before it is too late. I loathe this place; it is like a black pocket into which I've

been dropped to stifle, and I've told you that I must breathe. Take me up higher, mother, where nothing can ever touch me again."

He sobbed passionately and, clinging to her hand, he buried his face in the pillow, while his mother, the tide of her own emotions rising at the call of his, strove to quiet him with the tender cadences of love and pity in her voice.

"There, there, my little child. You are mother's good boy. You must let her bear it all for you, dear, because you are a tired boy and it has been a long, hard night. In the morning everything will seem very different. That's the wonder of the day, dear child; it shows us true proportions. Can't you go to sleep again," she leaned toward him and her soft kisses touched his face, "if mother will sit here close, close by your side?"

With a sudden boyish gesture, Lawrence turned to fling his arm about her and presently, as he grew calmer under the spell of her soothing, he slept with his head against her breast. And she, attuned to a quickened sense of motherhood at the touch, sat motionless until, with the slant of the first sunshine across the floor, he opened his eyes to hers.

Then at once, as she smiled down at him, he began to tell her breathlessly, wonderingly, of a dream he had had; and it was this dream, thus born, thus vitalized that, as the weeks went on recurred to him night after night, and seemed gradually to absorb his thought.

#### IV

OVER the brow of a hill came first a rush of cooler air and the glow of a sapphire sky where poised soft, clear-edged cloud shapes. Then the slender tip of a church-spire pointed above a grove of pine-trees that clung like shadows to the road, into whose grass-grown ruts the wheels of the carriage sank noiselessly as the top was gained.

The panting horses paused for breath

and Stillman looked around him with widening eyes. All around lay the Universe; around, below; reaches of forest that lost themselves in the purple distances of mountains; smiling meadows of young green rolling across the nearer hills; cornfields and wheat-fields and the warm, brown bosom of the earth showing through between; gray rocks that fell to a gleaming river on its silent journey eastward to the sea. Across the high places blew a wind. The coolness of it was healing; its strength held inspiration, and its purity brought refreshment as fragrant as the calm that succeeds a passion.

The rested horses walked slowly through a village asleep in the mid-day sunlight. First came a house of dull red brick. A white gate swung in its tangled hedge over a flagged path leading to the door. Across the way, vast barns silvered by the weather showed within, mows heavy with hay; then under a quivering aspen, a blacksmith's forge, cold, unused, in the midst of a cluttered doorway, burdock-grown, where clumsy carts, with rusting wheels, leaned against the fence. A stone cottage, its windows brushed by lilacs, was near-by, and beside it a bleak school-house with twin doors closed, and a barren flag-staff shaking in the breeze. A weather-beaten sign creaked over the village store, and the road circled in a worn brown bend to the wheel-scraped platform before it. Waving meadows flanked the church-yard under the pine-trees. A barrier of sagging chains shut in rows of moss-grown headstones, among which a path picked its faint way to the church itself, square and white against a dark background of tottering sheds. More houses with trim fences and red barns followed; a grove of maples, deepening into the gloom of hemlocks beyond, and a rock-strewn pasture dotted with swaying mullen stalks. Over all ranged the constant wind; over all hung the constant sunshine; over all brooded the constant silence.

Of human life there seemed scarcely a remembrance to the heart of the

watcher whose eager, searching gaze seized on each fresh impression, and carried from it to his mind a slowly strengthening recognition of reality,

Suddenly he sat erect in his seat and drew in the reins vigorously. The horses stood still, and the panorama of the passing village stopped simultaneously. Above the road appeared a house, high-walled, wide-lying, splendid. Terraces rose to it, box-bordered and alive with blossom. A fine curving balustrade met the gateway, urn-topped and graceful. Its pattern was carried on in the railing of the white-pillared gallery. Curtains fluttered at the long windows, the door stood wide open, and down the green pathway straight to his listening ear came the voice of a woman singing.

"It is my dream," he cried, "my dream come true! My wind-swept village on the hilltop where I can look off and see no end. Thank God, I am alive again. I told you, mother, that I must see it some day. This is the house! Ah, mother, I did not tell you all! This is *her* house and *she* is there and singing! I could not tell you this, mother, because it was her secret and mine, the secret that belongs just to a man and to the woman he loves. I am a man again, I tell you, a man and strong, and there is the woman that waits for me. I come to you, my soul, my life, I come!"

He started to his feet. The singing had ceased with a few closing chords, as of a harp struck lightly, and a girl stood in the doorway. The sun touched her bright hair. She smiled and held out her arms. But the man at the gate felt a rush of wind across his face and, as a sudden darkness fell upon him, he sank back and closed his eyes.

## V

He opened them to the familiar sight of the shadowed road that followed the river down the valley. In his ears sang again the melody of falling water, and once more the breath of hay-

fields scented the air. He turned to find behind him the same narrow ribbon of brown that stretched, flecked with sunlight, far into the distance before him. The horses trotted easily; their traces hung loose, and they showed no signs of heat or exertion. The reins lay lightly in his hands. Everything seemed the same, yet, as he looked about him, his quickened insight caught at a sense of sudden afternoon, of ripeness in the day. Instinctively he looked at his watch. Yes; it was much later than it should be, a full hour it seemed to him. The thought brought satisfaction, corroborating as it did the belief that clung at his heart more truly living than aught that met his eye or ear. He straightened himself and urged his horses on—it should be proved again, this belief, by some landmark, or, better yet, by the spoken word, perhaps, of some man or woman who knew the country well. He remembered vaguely a small house by the roadside where, in former drives, he had noticed the figure of an old man, bent and chair-ridden, in the doorway. The place could not be far off, unless he had already passed it. He scanned the road anxiously till a sudden turn brought the house in sight, and the old man sitting in his usual seat.

Stillman reined in his horses.

"I beg your pardon," he called out; "will you please tell me if I am anywhere near the Junction?"

The old man leaned forward eagerly and smiled shrewdly as he answered. His voice was cracked and shrill.

"No, ye ain't more'n half-way there yet. Say," he went on garrulously, "I know who ye be! You're the sick fellow that's hired Forrester's place up to Norwood. Say, I'd knowed that team of yours anywhere; I seen it go by times enough, I guess; speedy team; ain't it? You'd orter make the Junction in an hour and a quarter, anyhow, from your place; what time did you leave this mornin'?"

"Eleven o'clock."

"Eleven o'clock!" The old man's laugh was incredulous. "An' here 'tis nigh onto one! Say, I've had my



dinner a'ready. For the land's sake what you been doin' on the way, young man? Guess you stopped somewheres quite a spell!"

"No, I didn't stop at all, but I drove up over the hill and through that village on top of it. By the way," Stillman's heart was beating fiercely, but the tone of his voice was cool, "what's the name of the place?"

"What place d'ye mean?" The old man seemed puzzled.

"Why, the sleepy old village, itself; the village on the hilltop."

"There ain't no such place. What ye talking about? I tell ye it's all a down grade from Norwood to the Junction. There ain't no rise at all nigher than Pomfret Mountain, and that's more'n twenty miles over to the westward."

"But I've just seen it, I tell you. I've driven through the village and come down on the other side of the hill."

"You go on, go on, I say." The old man was trembling now, his voice a frightened scream. "I tell ye that's foolish talk. I've lived here more'n eighty-seven years, and I know. You hadn't ought to play no such tricks with me." He struck the floor sharply with his stick. "Lucy, Lucy!" he cried.

A dull-faced woman appeared sullenly from the kitchen. As Stillman lifted his hat, she seized her father and dragged him, chair and all, inside the hall. Then, as she turned to close the door, she called angrily:

"Don't ye scare him like that with them crazy notions! I know more about ye than ye think from folks of mine that lives up to Norwood, and I guess that more'n likely what they say is true!"

She tapped her forehead significantly, and Stillman, in a passion of disappointment that, even to his own surprise, swamped every other emotion, drove quickly on. He did not stop again until his thirsty horses veered sharply to the side of the road at the call of trickling water.

Astride the hollow log that served as a drinking-trough sat a little boy. His bare, brown legs held him sturdily

in place, as he leaned intently over the basin. He looked up, as Stillman called to him, to push back his yellow hair from a pair of pale blue eyes; round, wide apart and unafraid. Then he took some small pieces of wood from the trough, and slid easily to the ground, where he stood watching the horses as they plunged their noses into the cool water.

His interest caught Stillman's attention.

"Have you been playing that those chips were boats?" he asked.

The child looked up and shook his head.

"Oh, no, sir; they *are* boats. I've not been playing; I never play." Then he smiled mystically. "You see I'm not really a little boy at all, I'm the *admiral* of the *fleet*!"

"Yes, so you are! I beg your pardon, *admiral*!" Stillman's hand touched his hat in a salute which the child returned gravely. "You've been fighting a battle, perhaps?"

"No, sir; it's just a review of my squadron."

"Ah!" Stillman's voice grew serious at once. "Admiral," said he, "have you had your commission long? You seem a very young man for your rank."

"Not long," announced the child, "only since yesterday. I've been a great many things before this; a general with an army, and a wood-cutter in the depths of the forest. Once I was a king, changed into a black cat by a wicked magician, and I'm often a poet, sir, and a minstrel, too; and this afternoon," he looked up into the man's face earnestly and lowered his voice, "I'm going to be a prophet!"

Stillman had drawn the horses' heads from the trough, and was turning them to the road once more, but he held back at the last word. When he spoke there was an intensity to his tone that brought a wonder to the child's eyes.

"Prophet," said he, "for it is already afternoon, I must ask you a question." He pointed to the distance beyond the tangling trees.

"Is there, off there somewhere, a

high, steep hill with a road that leads up and over it and down again, and, on the very top a village—where the wind blows always, a silent village sleeping in the yellow sunshine?"

The child smiled slowly and nodded his head.

"Oh, yes," he answered. "Yes, indeed, for I know it, too!" Then he colored and stepped back shyly to the trough as he went on. "Because I see it myself, *inside!* Why, there's the mountain, now!" He looked down the valley and Stillman's eye followed his direction to a dim, blue shadow in the east. "Only yesterday, sir, it was across the river, and just see where it has gone today! But it's true, and the village is true, too; for I know them both. Long ago, sir, when I was a wood-cutter and lived in the forest, a good fairy used to talk to me about many wonderful things, and it was she who told me, sir, that there is no need of seeing things that we know!"

Stillman's heart leaped strongly in his breast. The whole world was wrong then and the child was right; the child to whom all things were possible, the vision and the realization alike of the truth! And to him these had come as well. He thrilled to a new sense of action in his brain as real as the rush of hot blood in his cheeks, and the pulse of strength that beat along his arms. The truth was there and it meant life again—life and health and achievement, and love! For *she* was part of the realization—*she*; its very crown indeed! His eyes rested tenderly on the boy who had turned again, absorbed, to his boats. With an interrupting thought, he smiled and drew something from his pocket as he called to him.

"Little Prophet," he said, as he put it in the small, brown hand, "I want you to keep this so that you won't forget me. It's my knife, and it's a good one, too."

The child's eyes sparkled as he held it up to the light.

"I thank you, sir," there was a ring of pleasure in his voice, "but I'm the admiral, now, and see," he pressed one

of the blades into a piece of wood that he still held, and the black handle stuck out threateningly, "this isn't really a knife at all! It's a big, big gun for my newest battle-ship!"

There came through the afternoon stillness the faint vibration of a moving train, and the horses pricked their ears at the sound of an echoing whistle, as their driver, in answer to the call, wheeled them suddenly to the road, and hurried them toward the little railway town that was already pushing its smoking chimneys through the distant tree-tops.

## VI

THE drive home, up the steadily climbing valley, seemed but the flight of wings; the long, steep miles compressed, as it were, into the bounds of a single thought that held Lawrence Stillman dominated, absorbed, all the way. He had missed the train at the Junction; no Miss Naylor was in sight; not finding anyone to meet her, she must have taken the branch line.

"There was only one passenger for Norwood," the lame station-master paused in his circuit of the platform at Stillman's question, "so, I know it must 'a' been her. She ain't been gone but a few minutes! You might almost catch up with her now, if you had a mind to," he added drily, "for that team o' yours ain't turned a hair. You'd ought to have got here though, if you'd hurried a little. Those are bang-up horses. What time did you leave Norwood, anyhow?"

Lawrence smiled, but he chose not to answer. "Oh, I started in time," he said, "but I was delayed." Then as he turned from the gleaming snarl of tracks to the open road, he heard the man call after him:

"Well, so long! I am sorry for you, and I guess she was disappointed, too! *She stood waiting for you there, in the doorway, for some time!*"

And, in quick response, there came to the other's ears the lingering touch of remembered music, and before the

eyes of his spirit the vision and the reality merged to the semblance of a living woman— Was her name *Marian*? He lashed his horses to a run. Yes, it was she, whom he had been sent to meet, it must be so! He saw it all clearly now. She had eluded him, even as the shadowy mistress of his dream—but she should escape him no longer. Straight lay the road to her; it ran to the very heavens. His was the Sun's chariot; his steeds were winged and a god held the reins as they flew above the clouds of earth.

"Onward and faster," his heart exulted. "I have found my high place, and life waited for me there; and now I go to where love waits, too. It is *she* whom I shall find, and I am not ashamed to meet her, for I am myself again. I live once more for her! It has gone, gone forever, the darkness that held me down."

And on the very summit of the last hill, that looked into the shaded village at its feet, as the foam-flecked horses paused to breathe heavily and hang their tired heads, he squared his shoulders and straightened himself resolutely. His eyes sharpened to a new impression of the scene before him. He saw there the contentment that follows labor, the promise of the peace that comes after pain.

Then, as he took up the reins again, he tossed his uncovered head and laughed aloud; the gay, free laugh of the man who has conquered and who goes forward to his reward.

His brother Arthur, standing at the gate as he drove in, sprang lightly to the step of the surrey and rode with him to the door.

"Here's our delinquent, mater," he called out, "rather the better for wear, it seems to me!"

Mrs. Stillman came running from the back of the veranda; when she saw Lawrence, the look of anxiety that struggled with her welcoming smile turned to a sudden surprise.

"Why, my dear boy!" she cried; she put her hand on his shoulder as he got out and tossed the reins to his brother, who drove off to the stable

with the horses. Then she thrust him gaily into a chair, and looked at him again closely.

"You *are* better," she went on; "what have you been doing to yourself? Oh, Larry, I'm glad you had such a good day. You can't have had any luncheon, though, and there is a certain hungry look in your eyes," she bent to touch his cheek with her lips, "that I know too well. So give me a match, dear. I'll light the kettle, and there are muffins coming—hot ones, Larry boy. It was a pity, our disappointment, wasn't it?"

Lawrence did not answer. His eyes were fixed on the tea-tray.

"Why are there only three cups, mother?"

Mrs. Stillman looked up, puzzled.

"Why should there be any more, Larry, or less?—one for Arthur, one for you and one for me."

"Where is Miss Naylor?"

Lawrence's eyes were fixed on the door. The match went out in Mrs. Stillman's hand.

"Why, Larry," she cried, "didn't you get our message? Didn't the station-master tell you?"

"Tell me what?"

"Why, we telephoned, and his wife answered and promised to tell her husband. It was too stupid and forgetful of her. To think that you never knew! Why, just after you left we had a telegram saying that Marian would have to postpone her visit. She goes abroad, unexpectedly, on Wednesday."

Lawrence started excitedly.

"Not here, not here! What do you mean? Why, she *must* be here!" He spoke hotly, brokenly. "I don't understand; I can't understand at all!"

He bowed his head in silence. The tension of his attitude held his mother silent, too.

The long moments passed. She watched him fixedly; with wonder, with fear. A bird-note rang from a tree-top, the faint perfume of heliotrope rose from the garden as the shadows deepened on the lawn.

At length he sighed, and slowly

raised his eyes to meet her eyes that waited for him. What she saw there mystified her, yet brought a kind of revelation.

"Why, Larry, child!" Her words came in a passion of tenderness. "How strange, how strange! You look as if you *cared!*"

Then, with the fierce instinct of motherhood to give its balm unasked, unquestioning, she brushed aside the crowding mysteries that must lie between them always, and seized on what she could comprehend.

"We can go to Europe, too, if you choose," she cried; "and in October, Marian says, she will surely come to us here."

In Lawrence's face she saw, as he answered her, the same *new* look that she had noticed before. Now it explained itself with a sudden recognition of strengthened will-power, intense, concentrated, compelling, and she marveled at the satisfaction in her own heart.

"Yes"—he spoke simply, as one who

deals with decisions—"we will go this Summer for a little while; I must see her, you know!"

Then he came to his mother's side and stood looking down at her. "But there's something else, something more, that I mean to do! For the first time in years, mother, I am able to think, to *think*, I tell you! Can you understand me; *really* to think? Mother, a wonderful thing has happened to me! I can't tell you how and I can't tell you why; but I seem to have got something that I wanted! I have come out of the dark clouds, I can see my way straight before me; and, best of all, deep down in my soul I know that I am well again—a man again—able, God willing, to make my life the fulfilment of my dreams. So in October, mother—" he stooped to gather her hands in his and smiled. His tone deepened and thrilled the listener with a haunting resemblance to his father's voice, as she had heard it long ago in his youth. "In October, mother, I am going back to my work!"



## A CRYSTAL-GAZER

By Aldis Dunbar

**B**ENDING to read my Fate within a sphere,  
The lucent surface held for me at first  
A rainbow—then a golden dream . . . Too near  
I leaned in eagerness—the bubble burst!



## LOOKS THAT WAY

**C**RAWFORD—I see the manufacturers have their energies bent on producing a noiseless auto.

**CRABSHAW**—I suppose they are trying to fix it so the pedestrian won't have any show at all to get out of the way.

# LE PENDU

Par J.-H. Rosny

**J**E végétais alors, dit le professeur Charlier, dans un obscur village de la Saintonge. Le gouvernement m'allouait onze cents francs par an pour apprendre à lire et à écrire à une quarantaine de marmots vermineux, galeux, rances, et, n'ayant pour me pousser de l'avant aucun personnage doué du symbolique bras long, je ne voyais d'autre bâton de maréchal qu'un poste de dix-huit cents francs, suivi d'une minuscule retraite. J'étais jeune; la nature m'avait fait optimiste; j'assaisonnais d'illusions ma vache enragée.

Mes vrais malheurs commencèrent du jour où je devins amoureux de la petite Lucette, la fille de Saboureaux, maire du village, juché sur cinquante hectares d'emblavures, de prés et de bois, propriétaire de sept vaches, de cinq bœufs, de trois chevaux, d'un troupeau de moutons, d'une potée de porcs grands et petits, sans compter une bonne réserve d'argent comptant. Il s'appréciait à sa valeur et n'en laissait ignorer à personne. Rien que dans sa manière de cracher sur les guérets, on se sentait devant un personnage puissant et redoutable. Pour un pauvre bougre d'instituteur, à la veste élimée, luisant comme un tuyau de poêle, il ne pouvait y avoir de pire folie que d'aimer Lucette. Mais, comme dit l'autre, l'amour est enfant de bohème, et Lucette promenait par la ferme et par les chemins un exemplaire de luxe de la race humaine. Elle était reliée en pulpe de lilas blanc, et teintée de la roseur des jeunes aubépines. Ses cheveux lui faisaient sur la tête une petite meule des pailles qu'on devait moissonner à Lilliput. La bouche close, c'était une flamme de pivoine in-

carnadine; ouverte, on voyait rire des lunules nacrées entre deux nuages cerise. Des lucioles bleues semblaient palpiter au fond des petites lanternes de ses yeux. Ce fut un désastre. Je l'aimai au point de ne pouvoir le dissimuler aux rudes regards des rustres. Et le père Saboureaux, lorsqu'il me rencontrait sur la route, envoyait dans l'espace un gros jet de salive et poussait un éclat de rire sarcastique, un rire de pirate et de roi-nègre.

Or, un dimanche, j'avais foncé droit devant moi, poussé par le désespoir, et j'étais arrivé jusqu'à la forêt des Espinettes, à dix ou douze kilomètres du village. J'y rôdais comme un fauve, dévoré par mon amour, détraqué par le sentiment de ma misère. À la fin, je m'arrêtai dans une clairière. J'allai m'asseoir sur un banc de mousse, lorsque j'aperçus un homme qui se balançait à la maîtresse branche d'un chêne. Un nœud coulant lui embrassait le cou; la langue lui passait entre les lèvres; ses yeux exorbités semblaient énormes; la face avait une couleur violette qui tirait sur le noir: c'était en somme un pendu, probablement un suicidé, et, après un sursaut d'épouvante, je me dis:

—Eh bien! quoi... son sort vaut mieux que le tien! Il ne souffrira plus.

Mon instinct ne répondait pas à ces paroles. Je me mis automatiquement en devoir de décrocher la carcasse. Le chêne, par son inclinaison et par de gros nœuds, rendait l'escalade assez commode: d'ailleurs, ayant passé une partie de mon enfance dans les bois, je grimpais bien. J'eus néanmoins beaucoup de peine à ramener mon homme à

terre. Dès qu'il fut étendu sur le sol, je lui donnai les soins utiles. Je savais comment m'y prendre, ayant pioché la question dans le traité du docteur Jusserand, traité précis et substantiel, où était esquissée la théorie des tractions rythmiques.

Mon homme était encore tout chaud. Toutefois, mes efforts le laissèrent d'abord insensible, et je désespérais déjà lorsque enfin il commença à donner des signes de vie. Une demi-heure plus tard, il avait repris connaissance et me remerciait :

— J'ai compris ma bêtise, ajouta-t-il, au moment où je me suis senti au bout de la corde...

Il me raconta rapidement la cause de son suicide. Marchand de bœufs à P..., il avait fait de mauvaises affaires et, affolé par la ruine, était venu se pendre dans la forêt...

— Pour une fichue idée, c'était une fichue idée! conclut-il. Si jamais que vous auriez des chagrins, ben, n'en faites pas autant! En attendant, vous êtes mon sauveur... faut que je vous montre à mes amis.

Il était un peu faible encore, mais, en s'appuyant sur mon bras, il se flat-ta d'atteindre P... Nous y parvîmes, en effet, au bout d'une heure de marche, et nous débouchâmes sur la place du marché, juste au moment où se terminait l'inauguration de la statue de Jacques Vermoutiers, le poète du treizième siècle. La foule se dispersait, un groupe d'hommes pavoisés, enrubbannés, "écharpés," se tenait encore sur l'estrade. Notre arrivée ne passa pas inaperçue, car mon compagnon s'était mis à crier :

— M'sieu le minisse!... M'sieu le maire! V'là un homme qui m'a sauvé la vie... J'étais pendu et déjà mort... Y m'a ressuscité... Y m'a ressoufflé la vie!

Il me poussait vers le groupe des hommes pavoisés. Je me vis devant un personnage sel et moutarde, le teint vinasse et les yeux terreux qui demanda d'un ton brusque au marchand de bœufs :

— Pourquoi étiez-vous pendu?

— Par désespoir, m'sieu le minisse,

vu que j'ai perdu tout mon bien. Pour lors j'étais allé dans la forêt et je m'avais mis la corde au cou... sus un chêne. Alors, v'là çui-ci qui passe, qui grimpe à l'arbre, qui m' décroche, qui m' ramène sus le plancher des vaches et qui m' souffle dedans... C'est-y pas là c' qu'on peut appeler un biau sauvetage? Et si y a des médailles, à qui qu'on les donnerait, si c'est pas à du monde comme ça?...

L'homme sel et moutarde s'était peu à peu tourné vers moi et me considérait avec attention.

— Qui êtes-vous et que faites-vous? demanda-t-il avec une rude bonhomie.

— Je me nomme Pierre Charlier, fische, je suis instituteur à la Croix-du-Montoir...

— Bon! Et où avez-vous appris à soigner les asphyxiés?

— Dans le traité du docteur Jusserand, répondis-je.

Quelque chose de joyeux, je ne sais quelle vanité presque naïve illumina le visage de mon interlocuteur :

— Oh! oh!... cria-t-il. Vous lisez donc le docteur Jusserand, vous!

Puis il se mit à rire :

— Mais mon garçon, le docteur Jusserand, ministre de l'instruction publique et des beaux-arts, c'est moi-même... Vous pouvez dire que vous avez une rude veine... Et vous allez être joliment attrapé! Car on vous donnera une médaille de sauvetage que vous n'aurez, fichtre! volée à personne. Et voilà pour votre courage! Ensuite, vous aurez les palmes, parce qu'un instituteur de la Croix-du-Montoir qui connaît l'art de soigner les asphyxiés selon les meilleures méthodes, n'est pas un bonhomme ordinaire. Ce n'est pas tout, j'aurai l'œil sur votre avancement... Vous ne moisirez pas sur place, mon gaillard.

Il me donna une tape sur l'épaule, fit prendre mon nom par un jeune homme qui l'accompagnait et ajouta :

— Faites comme le nègre!

Quand je m'en revins, vers le crépuscule, à la Croix-du-Montoir, la populace se précipita hors des venelles pour me voir arriver. L'un des premiers qui se

présenta devant moi, ce fut Saboureaux, accompagné de Lucette. Il m'aborda en lançant le jet de salive par quoi il débutait à toute conversation; mais c'était un jet aimable, un petit jet plein de bienveillance et presque d'amitié. Puis, il s'exclama :

— Ben! mon vieux Charlier, paraît que vous allez avoir eune médaille, pis eune belle décoration à vot' boutonnière... Ca nous fait honneur à tous; faut que vous veniez bouère eune bonne verrée cheux nous... et de la vieille!

Il me saisit par le bras et me poussa vers sa ferme en criant :

— Bonnes gens, v'là un gas qui va faire son chemin... faut ôter vos casquettes...

Dans la grande salle de la ferme, il m'installa au milieu des notables et déboucha bouteille sur bouteille. Puis, il fit avancer Lucette et déclara :

— A ce matin acore, c'était pas pour ton bec, mon garçon, et je te l'envoyais

pas dire. Mais à ce souèr, t'es un autre homme. Tu peux causer à la petite... Par exemple, si la médaille et la décoration arrivaient point... y aurait rien d'fait! Un gueux est un gueux! Moi, j'connais que deux choses: les honneurs et l'argent... pis les bonnes places que j'oubliais... car pour sûr t'auras une bonne place.

J'eus les palmes, la médaille, l'avancement et Lucette; je poursuivis mes études, je parvins à l'enseignement supérieur, je décrochai la croix dont mon beau-père promène encore le diplôme dans toutes les foires de son pays. Quant à la morale de mon histoire, il faut bien avouer qu'elle est un peu imprécise: prouve-t-elle qu'il est bon de décrocher les pendus, ou plutôt ne vient-elle pas corroborer la réputation brillante que la corde desdits pendus a su s'assurer auprès des meilleurs esprits, depuis des temps reculés?



## THE HAUNTED HOUSE

By Meribah Abbott

MY heart's a haunted house wherein I see  
The forms of things that were most dear to me,  
Gray shadow-shapes, once palpitant with fires,  
Dead Loves, and lost Ambitions and Desires,  
Fair Hopes . . . a hushed, illimitable band,  
Wan, wistful ghosts—each slain by its own hand.



### SO HE RANG OFF

"AND you didn't propose to her?"  
"No."

"Why?"

"I was leading up to it, but suddenly noted that her voice had a sort of previous-engagement ring."



# THE LETTER ON THE BUREAU

By Frederic Taber Cooper

IN her headlong rush down the Subway stairs from Vanderbilt Place, Mrs. Arnold suddenly found herself shoved to the wall by the crush of homeward-bound commuters, hurrying to catch their train by a narrow segment of a minute. She was barely conscious of some rude jostling, a painful prod from the corner of a suit-case, a grinding heel that for an instant held her skirt and almost flung her on her face. It was only when she had dropped the bit of blue pasteboard in the ticket-box and descended the remaining steps to the uptown platform that she gave herself time to draw a long breath, straighten her hat and smooth her wind-blown hair. It was only when her lungs had inhaled several deep draughts of the crypt-like atmosphere that an access of coughing made her realize how the keen, raw air without had rasped her throat. During her panic-stricken race against time, through street and avenue, under the falling dusk of January, Mrs. Arnold had not once noticed that her long red coat flared, unbuttoned, wide open to the wind. Her one definite thought had been of the letter, which with mad forgetfulness she had left, lying upturned on her bureau—Morgan Sherwood's foolish, compromising letter.

Down the long, dim vista of the Subway platform an army of passengers, the usual late-afternoon crowd, surged and eddied restlessly, the steady influx from the street above merging in the streams that crossed from local to express, from express to local, in a continuous give and take of human traffic. Above their heads scores of

gleaming bulbs gave battle to the subterranean gloom; from roof and wall the echo of all those tramping feet, the vibrant rush of trains, the jarring grind of brakes, was flung back in a blended, deadened roar; and east and west the mouths of the tunnels yawned, voracious, insatiable, endlessly engulfing light and sound.

Upon this ceaseless living picture Mrs. Arnold gazed with unseeing eyes. Whichever way she looked, on white-tiled wall or concrete pavement, before the murky tunnel mouths or over the heads of the jostling crowd, there danced and floated that wretched letter—that fateful little square of fine linen bond—just as any bright object on which we have strained our eyes over-long will continue to dance and float before us, whichever way we turn. Such a little letter it was, too! Not a hundred words in all; just a lozenge-shaped oasis of minuscule script, clear-cut as type, within the desert stretch of white margin—but deadly as a bit of dynamite, a miniature bomb. It might have exploded even now.

Her excited imagination fantastically pictured it at the moment of ignition, scattering the fragments of her reputation and domestic peace, as a whirling catherine-wheel scatters its expiring sparks. She shut her eyes, and the vision of the letter still floated before her, just as she had last seen it, lying face up, across the blue satin of her pincushion, flaunting itself for her husband to see, if he should chance to come home an hour earlier than usual—and Horace was so apt to come home an hour earlier than usual that it was almost a paradox to say

that he had any usual time for coming. Under the suspense of the delay, Mrs. Arnold's panic steadily augmented. She had just missed an express; its rear-end lights were vanishing up the dim vista of the uptown track, like two red, angry, vindictive eyes. She felt an impotent resentment against the strangers who had blocked her way upon the stairs. Those few seconds of delay might make all the difference between safety and its alternative, whatever that might prove to be.

Another local train drew into the station, the third since she had been waiting. She shrank back nervously, as the stream of tired business men and bundle-laden women followed sluggishly out. She had reached the point where she seemed to recognize Horace in every man she saw. Suddenly she remembered with relief that of course he would transfer to the express at Fourteenth street, not at Forty-second; all of the men from the big wholesale dry-goods district north of City Hall regularly changed at Fourteenth street. It was not here, at least, that she was likely to be brought suddenly face to face with Horace, with his sarcastic smile, his assertive voice, his domineering manner—perhaps also, as had happened only too often of late, with face abnormally flushed and a slight thickening of speech that told the unwelcome truth, even before his breath had warned her.

The twin headlights of the Broadway express dawned suddenly around the curve from Fourth avenue. As the train came to a halt, the waiting crowd broke up into surging, scrambling groups, clustering around the ends of the crowded cars like iron filings around the ends of a giant magnet. Mrs. Arnold yielded to the human tide, and a moment later found herself within the car, swaying from a strap which a man beside her pushed within her reach.

And all the while her brain kept up a series of staccato questions. How the time dragged! Was this what they called rapid transit? What was happening to that letter? And how

many times would she ask herself that same useless question during the five or six century-like minutes that it took to reach Seventy-second street? And after all, how needless her panic might prove to be! Aside from Horace, there was no one to disturb that letter, absolutely no one, not even Christine. That at least was a comforting thought. She had given Christine her afternoon and evening out, as she usually did on Thursdays; had told her that she need not come back to serve dinner, since Mr. Arnold and herself would dine out tonight. Horace dearly loved to dine at a restaurant. She had long since realized that this was his one social instinct. Usually he shunned the places where many people gather, to see and to be seen. It was hard to drag him out to teas and receptions, or even to the theatre, unless it was a vaudeville or a comic opera. But a dinner, especially a table-d'hôte dinner, where he did not have the trouble of ordering, was to him a perennial delight. She had learned to hold in reserve the proposition of dining out as a diplomatic measure on the nights when she had some favor to ask, some point to carry, and wished to put him in a genial and responsive mood. It was only recently that on one or two occasions the unsteadiness of his gait and loudness of his voice had attracted curious glances in their direction; only recently that the embarrassment she suffered warned her that a time might come when such occasional outings, which she had hitherto welcomed as an escape from the glum tête-à-tête of a home dinner, would have to be discontinued.

The flashing lights of the Times Square station, as the train swung round its orbit into the Broadway tunnel, warned her that her suspense was nearly over. Her feverish haste suddenly deserted her. She clung to the remaining minutes as to a reprieve. Supposing that Horace had, after all, reached home before her? She tried to compel herself to be quite calm, to realize just what was the worst that could happen if her husband had really

read that wretched letter. Horace was not naturally a suspicious man. Among the various shortcomings of which she privately accused him jealousy had not been numbered. Despite the frequent friction between them, she could not recall that they had ever quarreled about any man. She was free to come and go as she liked, to form her own friendships with both sexes, unquestioned. All that Horace asked was that he should not be compelled to share them with her.

Yet she foresaw that he might be very hard and unrelenting if his faith in her were once shaken. She remembered when once he served on a jury in a divorce case, how pitilessly he had stood out against the woman, until he had swung the rest of the jury over to his view. The trial had been a long one, and widely discussed. She had devoured every scrap of evidence that the papers published, because from the first her own sympathy had been with the weak, erring wife, whose folly had all started in her wretched home life, a husband whose intemperance had alienated all affection, as Horace's had alienated her own.

In all the heat and closeness of the car Mrs. Arnold found herself feeling very cold. What folly to unnerve herself further with vain alarms of lawsuits and divorce courts! Even if Horace did find that silly letter, she need not take for granted that he would make tragedy of it. He might not even realize that it had been written to her. The envelope, thank heaven, she had burned—had twisted it up mechanically and held it over the alcohol lamp, still lit upon the bureau, after she had finished dressing her hair. The letter itself contained no name or initial, nothing but a foolish nickname, a sort of confidential joke between them, that dated back to the day when she and Morgan had first met.

She had recalled how he had piqued her curiosity by saying, with startling directness, "It will seem odd to think of you as Mrs. Arnold, after all the months that I have had my own private name for you." And when she

peremptorily demanded what he meant he had gone on to explain, in that impertinently caressing tone which even then she could not quite resent. "Have you never been told, Mrs. Arnold, what a strange, elusive smile you have, a real Mona Lisa smile? For months I have caught tantalizing glimpses of that smile, across the width of a theatre, a church or a crowded street. But before I could find anyone to tell me who you were, you had vanished in the crowd. So I christened you My Lady of the Mona Lisa Smile. I am afraid that from force of habit, I shall keep on calling you so in my secret thoughts." And he did keep on calling her Mona Lisa, not only in his secret thoughts, but in the drifting intimacy of speech and letter. And now she realized that this minor indiscretion, in the cold black and white of the written words, implied a subtle understanding harder to explain away than if he had frankly called her Gladys.

Explain? There would be no use in trying to explain, if it ever came to that. The whole tone of the letter defied explanation. The trouble with Morgan was never so much what he said as the way he said it. There was nothing irreparable in her vague promise to go some day to his rooms and be taught how to make black coffee in the true Ottoman style. But anyone reading that letter would infer that visits to Morgan Sherwood's rooms were among the settled habits of Gladys Arnold's life. The blindest, most self-complacent husband could hardly fail to read into that letter a meaning beyond anything that it actually contained. Even now she scarcely understood how she could have been so criminally careless about it. A messenger boy had brought it, together with a great bunch of dewy violets, just as she was finishing a hasty toilet for Mrs. Milbank's Thursday at home—she had forgotten until almost too late that Mrs. Milbank's days were the first and third Thursdays, not the second and fourth. She could still see herself petulantly flinging down flowers and note together, in her first annoyance at his assured

way of taking things for granted. Then on second thoughts she had relented, pinned on the violets and rushed out, without giving herself time to reconsider.

What a gulf separated her present thoughts from those that had passed through her head all the way down in the trolley barely an hour ago. Then she had been chiefly engrossed in deciding what answer to make to Morgan, if she found him at the Milbanks', as of course she would. He was always there, always paying ostentatious court to sallow, voluble Emily Milbank, with her straw-colored eye brows and nervous laugh.

"That woman bores me dreadfully," he had once confessed, "but there are two good reasons why I keep on going there. First, there is always the possibility of meeting you; and secondly, she has one redeeming virtue—she knows how to serve a really good cup of tea."

It was not until she crossed the Milbank threshold that Gladys Arnold owned to herself that she had meant from the first to tell Sherwood that he might expect her next Monday at four. She entered in the midst of a temporary lull; most of the guests were in the back room, grouped around the tea-table. The hostess, as usual, had cornered Morgan by himself, in the drawing-room.

"Rescue me, Mona Lisa," he murmured in Mrs. Arnold's ear; "I am almost talked to death." Then he added, with his eyes on the violets, "I see that you had my letter safely. May I dare to expect you Monday?"

His letter? What had she done with his letter? It was then that her panic seized her, the blind, unreasoning panic of a stampede. She paused only to gasp out, "I left it lying on my bureau," noted that the bare statement left the man scarcely less perturbed than herself, stemmed the current of her hostess's voluble protest with an incoherent apology, and fled. She had been fleeing ever since, for fully fourteen minutes—fourteen eternities.

As she emerged into the breath of the

upper world, fear clutched afresh at Mrs. Arnold's heart, on finding that it had grown quite dark. The hour must be even later than she had supposed. The two short blocks to her apartment lengthened out interminably. As Jasper, the bell-boy, smilingly opened the door, she tried to summon courage to ask if her husband had reached home before her, but the simple words refused to come. In the elevator he volunteered the information.

"Ah jus' cah'ied Mista Arnol' up, jus' befo' you came in. He asked me if you was home yet, Mrs. Arnol', an' Ah tol' him no, Ah hadn't seen you come in yet. Be cah'ful o' the step down, Mrs. Arnol'; jus' hol' on a minute, till Ah stop de cah even."

She pushed past his cautioning arm, blindly stumbling down the six-inch gap, and opened the door with tremulous haste. The gas was lit in the inner hall, just as she had left it, but all else was quite dark.

"Horace, are you there?" she called in what she meant to be a clear, firm tone, but her voice seemed to die in her throat.

There was no answer. He was not in the drawing-room or the dining-room, but a whiff of strong tobacco led her to her own bedroom. There, with his coat off and his heels resting on the corner of her bureau, Horace sat in the gloom, steeping her dainty furnishings in the smoke from his rank, stale, briarwood pipe. Before he spoke a word, her eyes, trained by past unpleasantness, diagnosed the case; even the faint rays from the one gas-light in the hall revealed the familiar signs of a convivial day. And just beside him, on the bureau, within reach of his hand, perhaps where his hand had already reached, lay the letter which had cost her such a prolonged spasm of anxiety. She could see it quite plainly from across the room, a gray-white glimmer in the dusk. At that moment, she scarcely knew which of the two men she hated with the greater virulence.

As Arnold grasped the physical fact of his wife's return, he made a visible effort to gather the mantle of his dig-

nity about him. When he spoke, he enunciated each syllable with laborious care.

"Is—that—you, Glad-ysh? Come here! I—shay, come—here! I've—something—very—'mportant—t'say—t'you! I wan' tell you—" He paused and made a fresh and more careful start: "I—wan-tt—to—tell—you—that you've been n'glecting your shol'mn duty's a married woman!"

The phrase seemed to please him greatly, for he repeated it, with increased recklessness of speed. Ah, it was coming at last! Then he had read that letter, he must have read it! But suddenly Arnold's tone shifted from denunciation to tearful reproach.

"I didn't think it of you, Gladys, I didn't think you'd leave your loving husband all alone in the dark! Why don't you light the gash? That's what I want t'know!" With savage abruptness he repeated, "D'you hear me, Gladys? Why the devil don't you light the gash!"

Coming on top of her recent tension, the grotesqueness of his anticlimax brought the woman to the verge of hysterics. She felt that she could not speak without laughing inanely. Instead of answering, she crossed swiftly over to the bureau, intending under cover of the darkness to slip the accusing letter out of sight. But with unexpected activity, Arnold drew himself to his feet, caught up the paper, twisted it into an improvised torch, and unsteadily made his way toward the one lighted burner in the hall.

Breathlessly, the woman watched his uncertain progress. Oh, if he would only burn it! But beneath the light he paused, and with the freakish curiosity of intoxication proceeded to smooth out the crumpled sheet and inspect its contents. Clinging to the portière for support, she wondered weakly why she stood there rooted to the spot, waiting for the crash to come. Why didn't she spring forward, snatch the paper from him and light it herself? Instead, she stood there dazed, in an anguish that seemed to numb her limbs and close her throat; and the

chance for interference slipped from her. The unexpectedness of his sudden, noisy laugh made her wince, as from a blow in the face.

"What a funny letter!" he announced joyously. "Funniesht letter I 'mosht ever read! Letter to Mona Lisha. I don't know any Mona Lisha! Say, Gladys, who's Mona Lisha? Who is Mona Lisha?"

Then, as she made an ineffectual attempt to take the letter from him, he held her off with one hand, all the time smiling with the sly intelligence of a precocious schoolboy.

"Oh, no, Gladys; can't let you see this letter! Not proper letter for r'shpect'ble woman to see—an' you are r'shpect'ble woman, even if you do leave loving husban' in the dark! Tell you what, I'll read it to you. That'll make it all right. You list'n, an' I'll read it to you!"

To hear Horace read that letter, blind to its import, foolishly chuckling over its presumption, seemed to Gladys the one last straw which ironical fate had no right to put upon her. In another moment she would shout, sob, shriek aloud, make any noise, bad or good, to drown the sound of his voice.

"Horace," she said desperately, "you must not read that letter. It belongs to a—woman I know, a friend of mine. She left it here today. We mustn't either of us read it."

Instantly the man's mood changed. He straightened up with a great show of dignity. "Letter to a friend of yoursh? Why didn't you say so before? That altersh whole business! Makes it very serioush! I don't see what you've been laughing for, Gladys, if that letter was to a friend of yoursh! I'm seriously dish'pointed in you, Gladys. No, I can't let you have such a 'mportant letter. I got to think it over. Settled rule in business never t'give 'mportant letter to woman who laughs!"

With portentous solemnity he folded the crumpled page, and persevering clumsily, at last engineered it into the safe recesses of his breast-pocket.

What could she do? She fairly

wrung her hands in the anguish of her impotence. It needed only a little thwarting, a word too many, to put him in an ugly mood. If left to himself, she knew from experience that he would finish his pipe, take himself to the dining-room sofa, like a tractable child, and after an hour's nap awaken quite refreshed and sober for the rest of the evening. They could then go out for their belated dinner, if not in a gay mood, at least without hostility. But Horace had a curiously tenacious brain. The memory of that funny letter would surely survive his nap, but equally surely it would have ceased to be funny. Whatever mortification his present condition menaced in a public restaurant, she chose to risk it, rather than the alternative. She dared not let him have a chance to sleep off the fumes of alcohol until she had that letter safely in her own possession.

"Horace," she said, and the appeal in her voice was not feigned; it had the pathos of acute physical weakness, "can't you finish your smoke later on? I am desperately hungry. Christine is not home tonight, you know, and we must go to a restaurant for dinner."

The suggestion had a tonic effect on his unstable mood. "Restaurant? Goin' t' try that new place at C'lumb's Circl'? Good! Shay, Gladys, I hadn't noticed how stunning you had yourself fixed up tonight. All f' my benefit, too! Get on to the violets!"

Once outside in the bleak night, the sting of an easterly wind rapidly cleared the mist from Arnold's brain. As there was no car in sight, they continued down Broadway, deciding to walk the scant half-mile that separated them from Fifty-ninth street. Arnold's jovial mood endured, but every minute his step became firmer, his speech more rational. Suddenly the harassed woman realized that his growing sobriety threatened to defeat her plans. She found herself straining every nerve to keep his thoughts in harmless channels, to make light talk of salads and entrées, the dinners they had eaten in the past, the dinner they were to have tonight. And all the while the

thought of food gave her an inward shudder; all the while she knew that within a few inches of her hand, just inside her husband's coat and separated only by the thickness of the cloth, that letter still reposed—the letter that made her physically sick with anxiety, and that he had for the time forgotten. She could almost hear it rustle at each chance contact between them as they walked.

The restaurant they had chosen for tonight had its principal dining-room on the second floor, the front windows looking out across the broad expanse of the Columbus Circle, with its radiating avenues of twinkling street lamps, its constant criss-cross of laden electric cars, flashing like comets in their elliptic course around the central monument. One table by the window had just been vacated, and they made their way to it. Mrs. Arnold scarcely noticed that the room was crowded with belated diners. Her one obsession was that letter and her imperative need to recover it. How exactly like Horace, she thought bitterly, to do the one thing that she ardently desired him not to do—to grow sober for the one hour in their lives when she had ever wished him otherwise!

The waiter approached to take their order.

"Cocktails?" queried Arnold, expecting her stereotyped refusal.

She surprised him by answering with alacrity, "Yes, please, Horace, a dry Martini."

It was not merely that she felt faint and dizzy from suspense, and craved the fictitious strength of the cocktail. It was part of a sudden rash project, to brave the mortification of contemptuous glances; to lead him on to drink Martinis, wines, liqueurs, what he would; to watch his face flush and his eyes grow dull; and when at last he sank into an inert stupor, to regain her letter, and trust to the paid friendliness of waiter and cabman to get him home. But she had counted apart from the freakish tricks that lurk in alcohol. The keen night air had held in abeyance the strength of the spirits

he had taken earlier in the day; but the warmth of the restaurant, the vitiated, smoke-laden atmosphere, sent the blood surging to his brain; and a single insidious cocktail sufficed to arouse him to a good-natured and most unusual boisterousness. When the oysters came he tasted of one; then with a swift, twirling motion sent the rest spinning, plate and all, to the floor, with a crash that focused fifty curious pairs of eyes upon their table.

When the waiter hurried forward to remove the traces of the disaster Horace greeted him in tones overflowing with benevolence and self-elation.

"Oyshtersh too warm," he explained, with the utmost friendliness. "Always sh put warm oyshtersh on the floor. Floor'sh proper place for warm oyshtersh."

Crimson with shame, Gladys dared not remonstrate. She knew not what new demon her lightest word might awaken. Her own oysters went away untasted, and were replaced by a soup, an appetizing julienne that she forced herself to taste. A glance across the table showed her that Horace's face still showed a joyous self-approval at his recent exploit. An instant later he had sent his soup-plate spinning to the floor, along the trail of the vanished oysters. Several men at nearby tables started to their feet in indignant protest, but a glance at the mute misery on the woman's face effectually checked them.

This time the head-waiter himself came forward, grasped the situation, and spoke a few discreet words of conciliation and remonstrance. Horace proved to be unexpectedly docile. "A' righ', m' boy, I'll keep quiet. Sorry to make troubl', wouldn't make troubl' for a worl'. But, shay, tha' shoup was col'. A'ways put col' shoup on a floor; floor'sh proper place for col' shoup."

Gladys turned to the window, to hide the blinding tears of mortification, of helplessness, of surrender. She sat there dumbly, gazing with unseeing eyes across the somber vista

of Central Park; while in the room behind her she could still feel the curious, quizzical glances of the other diners turned upon her table, stabbing her in the back. She felt herself humiliated by the failure of her cheap, unworthy maneuver. It seemed that, with the wreckage he had made, something also was shattered of her self-respect. But the crisis was past. Horace's noisy, boisterous mood was over. To the head-waiter, who personally served the next two courses, he became friendly, even confidential, volubly praising the food, the service, and sending his personal compliments to the cook. "Now, don' forget, tell 'im my complimen's, Mr. Arnol's complimen's, an' shay bes' duck I ever tasted. Beautiful, beautiful duck."

Meanwhile Gladys had been doing some tense thinking. With the proverbial courage of desperation, she ventured a bold stroke.

"Horace, have you forgotten there is a letter in your pocket that you are going to read to me?"

An alert look dawned in his dull eyes. "Oh, no, I haven't forgotten that letter. Mona Lisha letter, funniest letter I ever read. But you said," he placed both elbows on the table and gazed across at her with judicial solemnity, "you said mus'n't read that letter, b'longs to frien' of yours. Changed your mind, have you? W'at you changed your mind for?"

"Yes, Horace, I have changed my mind. That was just a joke. I want you to read it, or let me read it. It doesn't make any real difference which, does it? Please give me the letter."

"Oh, I can't bother now, got to finish this duck. Beautiful duck. Where's that waiter? Want to talk to him some more 'bout this duck. Shay, Gladys, I'll make a bargain with you. Tell me who Mona Lisha is an' I'll give you the letter."

With no small labor he extracted the crumpled sheet from his pocket, and smoothed it out upon the table before him. It maddened her to see the letter lying there, within easy reach. She



wondered how violent a scene would result, if she should snatch it forcibly.

"It's Mrs. Milbank," she announced recklessly, reaching her hand, that he might fulfil the bargain. She could not have told why she named Mrs. Milbank rather than any one of a dozen other women that she knew, unless it was that the last glimpse she had of Morgan Sherwood that afternoon, he and Emily Milbank were still talking together alone in the drawing-room. Somewhere, at the back of all her other troubles, that memory had rankled. But she was quite unprepared for the look of eager intelligence that spread over her husband's face, as she spoke the name.

"Mrs. Milbank? Peter Milbank's wife? Then I'll bet a hundred to one that I can name the man who wrote it. It's Morgan Sherwood!"

Mrs. Arnold suddenly went quite white. "What made you think of Morgan Sherwood?" she questioned, almost fiercely.

"Right, am I?" Arnold rejoined, with a rather grim laugh. His intense interest was fast sobering him. "So it is Sherwood, is it? Low-down cur! Oh, I know you've always stood up for Sherwood, Gladys, an' I don't believe in taking up other people's quarrels. But after what I've heard today, I tell you we can't afford to know Morgan Sherwood any more. An' what's more, we don't want to know him!"

"What has Morgan done?" gasped Gladys. But she knew the truth, before her husband answered. In her mind she could see again the tableau in the drawing-room—Morgan Sherwood paying ostentatious court to sallow, voluble Emily Milbank, with her straw-colored eyebrows and nervous laugh. Fool that she was, she had believed him when he said that Emily bored him, bored him dreadfully. She could still hear him asking, with his soft, hypocritical voice, "Rescue me, Mona Lisa!"

Meanwhile, Horace talked on, in an unbroken stream. "It was an easy guess. I knew it couldn't be anyone else, if the letter belonged to Emily

Milbank. You see, I lunched with Milbank today. Poor old Milbank! He told me all about it. He's going to get a divorce—going to get it easy, too. She doesn't know yet; Sherwood doesn't know yet; nobody knows yet, 'cepting you and I, and we mustn't tell. Going to be a big surprise."

"You don't mean Morgan Sherwood is to be named as co-respondent? Why, it's impossible!" But she knew, as she spoke, that, far from being impossible, it was the key to a hundred little things that had puzzled her.

"That's all you know about it! Old Milbank has found letters, heaps of them, enough to get divorces from a Mormon family of wives. An' when I think of all Milbank has done for Sherwood, how he helped him along, and paid his debts, and pushed him socially, and boomed him professionally, I feel as if to call him a low-down hound was wasting words that are altogether too good for him." Horace still held the crumpled letter, dubiously. "I wonder whether we ought to give old Milbank this one?"

Gladys Arnold almost screamed her answer to him: "Oh, you would never do that, Horace? Give the poor woman a chance!"

He eyed her with sudden hostility. "What do I care for the poor woman? Any woman who would let a man like Morgan Sherwood send her compromising letters, deserves all that is coming to her. But I don't want to bother poor old Milbank, unless it's important. And he has dozens of worse letters than this, ever so much worse. And I won't have you dragged into it. I guess that settles the matter; we'll burn this letter."

She watched him with fascinated eyes, as he once more twisted up the unhappy scrap of paper, lighted it and approached it to the end of the cigar he had just taken from his case. With the flame within an inch of the cigar, he paused meditatively, slightly relapsing into his previous stumbling speech, now that the excitement of their discussion had waned.

"No, I won't do it!" he said decided-

ly. "I may have my faultsh, Gladys, an' you know it. I may drink too much sometimes, an' put col' shoup on the floor, when I oughtn't to. But I'm not so low-down yet as to spoil a good cigar with the dirty smoke from Morgan Sherwood's letter!"

The twisted paper dropped from his fingers and smouldered itself to ashes upon the plate. Horace struck a match, and soon his thoughts drifted into other channels. Gladys watched the curling smoke with mingled feelings. Now that the tension was over she felt curiously limp and nerveless. With a wave of self-contempt, she realized that she had been used as a cloak to cover Sherwood's vulgar intrigue with a faded little woman with yellow eyebrows. She wondered in sudden abasement whether Horace,

with all his faults, was not too good a husband for a woman who received compromising letters from Morgan Sherwood, a woman who deserved all that was coming to her—a woman who still wore Morgan Sherwood's violets! Stealthily, she unpinned the wilted flowers, and under cover of the table viciously crushed them, bruised them, tore them leaf from leaf, her nails cutting her own flesh in her suppressed anger, till nothing remained but a few purple stains on her fingers, some added rubbish on the floor. Further down the room the waiters were putting the deserted tables in order.

"Come, Gladys," said Arnold suddenly, "we've had the jolliest sort of an evening. But we're the last ones here. Letsh go home!"



## THE FATTED CALF

By Edith Macvane

AS the Fatted Calf beheld the Father's Axe about to fall,  
To convert him into Cutlets for the Homing Prodigal,  
"Why kill one Calf," he cried, "to furnish Welcome for the Other?  
Pshaw! you lack a Sense of Humor, thus to slay me for my Brother!"



### LITERALLY

"WHAT is a figure of speech, pa?"  
"Your mother—sometimes."



SHE—The wedding was indefinitely postponed.  
HE—Who gave the bride away?

# A HEXAGON OF HAPPENINGS

By Harold P. Huntress

I

THE ELITE MAGAZINE,  
NEW YORK, January 15th, 19—.  
Messrs. Barrabas & Co.,  
Publishers.

DEAR SIRs:

Kindly send me one copy of  
"Passionate Songs from the Sofa of  
Sufi," translated by De Kay Dent. I  
enclose \$1.50 in payment.

Yours truly,

CARL URBAIN.

II

NORTH CHUGGVILLE, N. H.  
January 15th, 19—.  
Messrs. Barrabas & Co.,  
Publishers.

DEAR SIRs:

I enclose \$1.50, for which kindly  
send me one copy of your publication,  
"The Treasury of Sacred Verse," and  
oblige,

Yours truly,

(Rev.) ELIPHALET SCROGGS, D.D.

(Both of the above letters were  
received the same day by Messrs. Bar-  
rabas & Co.)

III

THE ELITE MAGAZINE,  
NEW YORK, January 18th, 19—.  
Messrs. Barrabas & Co.,  
Publishers.

DEAR SIRs:

Instead of receiving "Passionate  
Songs from the Sofa of Sufi," your

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shipping department forwarded "The  
Treasury of Sacred Verse"! This latter  
I return today, and shall hope to re-  
ceive "Sufi"—she is much more to my  
fancy!

Yours truly,

CARL URBAIN.

IV

January 19th, 19—.  
Carl Urbain, Esq.,  
The Elite Magazine.

DEAR SIR:

We regret exceedingly the error of  
our shipping department, and send you  
today the correct book.

Very truly,

BARRABAS & COMPANY.

V

NORTH CHUGGVILLE, N. H.  
January 20th, 19—.  
Messrs. Barrabas & Co.,  
Publishers.

DEAR SIRs:

I enclose \$1.50, for which please  
send one copy of "The Treasury of  
Sacred Verse."

Yours truly,

(Rev.) ELIPHALET SCROGGS, D.D.

VI

LEDGER PAGE OF MESSRS. BARRABAS & CO.

SCROGGS, REV. E. . . . . Dr.		
Jan. 16,	1	Treasury Sacred Verse. . . . . \$1.50
" 21,	1	do . . . . . 1.50
		Cr.
Jan. 16,	Cash,	\$1.50
" 21,	do	1.50

# THE LONG, LONG LANE

By B. M. Bower

LONESOME got up and stretched his arms above his head—which means that he was obliged to curl his fingers to keep from scraping the ridge-pole of the line-camp shack. On his browned face brooded the gloom of settled ennui and distaste for the life he was living. It was that gloom which had brought him the name "Lonesome" among his fellows.

"If the fellow that first permeated defenseless civilization with that remark about 'It's a long lane that has no turning,'" he remarked disgustedly, "had ever toiled on a Montana cow-ranch, he'd 'a' changed the wording some."

Chan Morgan looked up briefly from his game of solitaire. He held a red ace in his hand, and there were two places to build to; so that his tone was what one might call indifferent.

"What about it?" He laid the ace on the deuce of clubs and then meditated upon the wisdom of the play. He was not thinking much about Lonesome just then.

"He'd 'a' put it like this—if he didn't say worse: 'It's a *damn* long lane that has no turning.' If hunting a stake in this man's country ain't the damndest long lane ever I strayed into, I don't want to tackle a longer. I've spent six years drinking alkali till I ooze sal soda, and perambulating over the range looking for my fortune and never finding it to home when I call; I tell yuh right here and now, Chan, I'm good and sick of it. I want to get back where there's cornfields, and houses close enough so yuh don't have to pack a lunch and blankets getting from one to the next, and girls— And I say

again, and say it louder: It's a da——"

"Yuh needn't," cut in Chan, placing the jack of hearts on the ten-spot in the top row; "leastways, not any louder; you're plenty audible, right now."

"If ever I do get more than enough to keep me in bridle-bits and smoking material," Lonesome went on, after a minute of silence save for the faint, swishing click of the cards, "I tell yuh right now, it's me for little old Illinois. I'm plumb sick of just grass and hill with nothing but cow-brutes and buzzard-head horses for society; with maybe a dance now and then to make yuh realize how thundering lonesome yuh are, and what a lot you're missing. I'd ruther hoe corn for my board and clothes. I'd ruther——"

"Well, who's holding yuh?" snorted Chan, putting the queen of diamonds upon the jack, and adding the king from the reserve pile. He shuffled off three, turned up the ace and added it to the king, drew a long breath of satisfaction and believed that he had the game beaten. Lonesome's complaining was annoying, like the hum of a disgruntled mosquito when one wants to sleep.

"Blamed, rotten poverty's a-holding me—that's what. There's a girl back there that— But I can't go back without a stake; only for that, I wouldn't 'a' stayed a holy minute. But what's a man going to do? I've used my rights, and got my homestead proved upon, and a desert claim that ain't by no means blossoming like a rose. What good are they? I couldn't *give* 'em away. I might better 'a' been riding with a long rope and a bunch uh irons tied to my saddle. I'd

'a' had some cattle by this time—and I'd about as soon be a rustler as live the way I've been doing. A fellow——"

"Aw, dry up. You talk bug-house, Lonesome; there's neither sense nor poetry in them remarks. If you'd quit bawling about the country and settle down to liking it, yuh wouldn't have any kick coming. I wouldn't live anywhere else—not if I was paid for it. A man that can ride over the range and cuss it like you do—just plain cussing when you're hungry, or the sand gets in your eyes, or you're standing night-guard in the rain, or something, is different—but cussing the country systematic and malignant, the way you do, there's something sure wrong with that man. It ain't the country that's to blame, Lonesome; it's *you*." Chan shuffled off three cards, saw that the deuce of hearts was where he couldn't get at it without cheating, grunted disgust and swept the deck together for another try. "Why don't yuh marry and settle down?" he demanded pettishly, the while he shuffled.

"Marry who? If it's Myrt Westman you're thinking of, I don't want her bad enough to settle down in this damn——"

"Uh course, I don't suppose it's a question uh whether she wants *you*," fattered Chan, his eyes fixed upon his fingers.

"I ain't asked her, if that's what you mean," Lonesome retorted. "What's more, I ain't dead sure that I will. She's mighty nice—but I know where there's nicer."

"Yuh do? Well, if I was you, I'd drift. I wouldn't set back here and growl about the only part uh God's earth that's fit for a white man to live in. I'd pull out and go back to a little two-by-four country that's more my size. I'd hike back where the girls are all yellow-haired and sprouting wings. I'd stake myself to a hoe and one uh them cornfed angels and live happy ever after. I wouldn't stay in a country that gave me the sharp pangs uh distress that Montana appears to give you, Lonesome. Better throw another chunk on the fire, hadn't yuh?"

Chan, having got another layout that promised much, dismissed the subject wholly from his mind.

Lonesome went to the door and stood looking out for a moment at the bleak, moon-washed bluff hunched up against the clouds, so close that the huge boulders seemed toppling for a slide down upon the cabin. He eyed it resentfully. Over its ridge was where the sun first peered belatedly into the coulee in the morning; beyond the ridge—miles and more miles away—stretched the sunny cornfields, the meadows and homesteads of his beloved Illinois. On the ridge a gray wolf howled plaintively the hunting call. Across on the farther hillside a coyote yapped back impertinently. Straight ahead, the little, round corral lay empty, and beside it, in the low, sod-roofed stable, he could hear a horse sneeze the hay dust from his nostrils. And in his heart he hated it all with a hatred that rose up in futile rage against the circumstances that held him there, and clamored against his tight shut teeth for the speech he knew was childish, weak.

"Say! are yuh trying to warm the whole coulee, Lonesome?" mildly questioned Chan over his shoulder, with a card poised between his fingers.

"Lord, how I do hate this damn country!" Lonesome muttered, and shut the door viciously. "That cussed hill has stood right there every Winter since I've worked for the Block Seven, and never moves a muscle—which is to say, a rock. And the same damn wolf howling on top, and——"

"Come to think of it," Chan spoke cheerfully, "it *is* a crying shame that same hill don't have to be planted fresh every Spring, and hoed and watered, same as them cornfields you're batty about. But if I recollect it has stood just like that ever since I was a kid. Queer, how blame permanent Mania Nature does things."

Lonesome hitched his shoulders ill-naturedly and threw more wood on the heap of coals in the fireplace, rolled a cigarette in the purely mechanical

fashion that comes with long practice, and brooded before the fire.

A breeze came whispering down the coulee and shook tentatively the one little square window of the shack; the flames heard, nodded greeting and danced on their toes, craning up the wide chimney to speak to the breeze above. The wolf, up on the ridge, gave a long, wavering note, and from afar came the answer weirdly.

Lonesome leaned with elbows on his knees, listened to the wind gusts and to the wolf, watched the flames preening and craning wishfully toward the call, and pinched his brows closer together. He hated it. He had hated it every day of the six long years, and the hatred was growing within him. He wondered how long it would be—this long lane of fortune seeking in the range land. He wondered why men like Chan—good fellows, too, they were—could live on and on in the wild reaches of plain and barren hills, with never a thought for that smiling land which lay far beyond the ridge where howled the wolf. They, too, knew the East; they knew, but they did not care. They were content to spend their days in the saddle and their nights under a canvas roof, or perhaps with nothing between them and the stars; or in Winter, to live apart from their fellows in a little, sod-roofed cabin like this, with days in the saddle keeping watch over the drifting cattle that they strayed not too far off the home range. They were content—and he—he grudged each day that passed and found the ridge between him and home. Days while he rode—and he rode with the best of them—his thoughts turned wistfully to that other life. He had not cared for it, particularly, when he was living it; he had not appreciated the comfort of soft lying at night, or of mingling much with his fellows. He had come West—and the West had been too big for him, and too lonely. He wondered if, in another six years, he would get used to having the skyline pushed back eighty miles, or a hundred; to riding up on a ridge and finding that

his outlook was limited only by his range of vision; that the horizon was curved, as one sees it on the ocean. Or to look away and away, and see low-lying, faintly blue mountains outlined against the deeper blue of the sky; to feel the wind always a-sweep across the land, laying flat the grasses where it passed; to having always cattle and horses and other riders like himself making up his life and filling his days; and to sit at night and listen to the howling of the gray wolf and the yapping of the coyote, and to the faint shuffling of cards as Chan played *solitaire*.

He bent, picked up a long stick with blackened point and thrust it roughly in among the leaping flames, and they stopped dancing long enough to spit angry sparks at him for his interference.

"Time to roll in, I guess," Chan said, yawning and clasping his smooth, white hands behind his brown head. "I beat it, anyway; built on the tray, too—which is generally my unlucky card."

Lonesome drew a long breath and came back to the hateful present; covered the fire methodically, wound his watch and went over to his rough board bunk with its gray wool blankets and the calico-covered pillow, stopped to listen to a particularly wailing note of the wolf, and drew off his boots, dropping them to the floor with a thump.

"Yes, sir, it's a damn long lane—Montana," he said meditatively.

The long lane had turned; that is, Lonesome discovered that his homestead and his desert claim up Swift Current way were worth many dollars as oil land, even though they still refused to blossom like the rose onereads about. He sold them, one day just before the horse round-up started that Spring, and suddenly realized that he had the stake, magnified beyond his dreams, for which he had been waiting so long; that his fortune had unexpectedly come knocking at his door, and had found him at home.

When he was convinced that it was real money, and that he was not dreaming, he immediately sold other things: his saddle, bridle, chaps and spurs, for instance, and his bed. Rags, a shaggy-maned pinto that he owned, he gave to Chan. He liked Chan. He even begged Chan to go back with him to God's country and be a white man.

Chan wouldn't; he said that Montana looked good to *him*, and he guessed he'd stay a while—and Lonesome looked at him wonderingly. How any man could stay in Montana when he had the chance to leave he could not understand. However, he rode over and told Myrtie Westman good-bye, and then made straight for the nearest place where he could buy a ticket to Illinois. To Chan he remarked that it was like getting pardoned out of the pen, as near as he could tell for never having been pardoned out. Anyway, he thanked the Lord that cow-punching was only a bad taste in his mouth, and he'd try and forget the last six years.

Then he stepped eagerly upon the platform of his train and waved his hat.

In a month he wrote a letter to Chan. The letter, copied verbatim, is this:

DEAR CHAN:

I'm in God's country, and you can gamble I'm sure enjoying every breath. Talk about an Eden! I'm rolling in flowers—you ought to smell the lylocks once. And eating!—say, I've had custard pie and chicken every day since I got here, and real cream to drink; *drink*, mind you. The canned variety don't go here, you bet. And girls—say, Chan, you just ought to see the girls; it would be worth the trip back here, all right, all right. My old girl is still here, and no loop on her, but the trouble is, they's a bunch of peaches grewed up since I left. I been close-herding the bunch, but there's so many nice ones I just don't know where to ride in and begin cutting out. I've been to fourteen dances and eight parties, and go to church regular and hold up one corner of the hymn-book for a girl. And every Sunday it's a different girl. It's great, all right. Cow-boys is scarce back here, and if you'll come back you can be the White Haired Boy, sure. It's as good as being a soldier-boy home from the war, all right. I'm sure the real thing. Think uh setting in the best chair with a bunch of pretty girls hovering around, listening to you tell it scarey. Chan, they's nothing to beat it. You better come on back where I am. Mother looks just as she did when I left,

and you ought to set your teeth into one of her custard pies. She's sure a swell cook. Father's got the rhumatism and goes with a cane. You better come back, Chan.

Your friend,

EDGAR C. CORBIN.

Chan did not go anywhere, except on the round-up; and for a long time he heard no more from Lonesome, who was now being called Edgar, or plain "Ed."

Then a letter went West—a shorter letter than was the first. Lonesome, it seemed, was still having the time of his life—but how was Rags coming on? Did he still show his teeth when the cinch was tightened? And how was Myrtie Westman? And what had become of all the boys? Was Shorty still cooking for the Block Seven? And why didn't Chan write oftener and more of it? (In that letter Lonesome forgot to suggest that Chan come back to God's country.)

Back in his native town, Edgar C. Corbin rolled himself a cigarette and leaned against the barn door, and looked away over the ripening cornfields; they were his own, and he eyed them gloomily, wondering why he did not feel the gloat of possession that he had expected to feel. With his thousands he had invested heavily in cornfields, and meadows, with houses and barns snuggled among trees. He had come near investing in a wife, as well. But the girl had been wearisome, though she was the prettiest in the neighborhood. Lonesome—who was Lonesome no more—found her, after the first month of the engagement, a bit hard to talk to. For that matter, she seemed to have the same trouble with him. So they quarreled and went their ways, and Lonesome told himself that there wasn't a girl in the bunch could hold a candle to Myrtie Westman, either for looks or brains. Myrtie could ride! He had tried to teach the engaged one the art, with results unsatisfactory to both. He had not attempted to teach another.

Anyway, there wasn't much fun in riding when a fellow couldn't find a decent saddle in the country, and had to ride down lanes, or up lanes, or across into another lane, whenever he started



anywhere. Lonesome told himself that he had had about enough of the lane proposition, and so gave over riding. There were other things that he had given over: going to church, for instance, and holding up one corner of a hymn-book for a girl. And he was tired of chicken and custard pie; a fellow couldn't get hold of a decent beefsteak, it seemed like, for love or money; and a dish of dried apricots, stewed with lots of sugar, wouldn't go bad, for a change. Or even a mess of fat, black prunes with the pits just about to fall out of them. And what was the matter, that mother couldn't seem to get the right twist on baking-powder bread? He'd tried to tell her, and even mixed up a batch, once. As for sour dough—well, she just didn't savvy, and that was all.

Still, it was God's country, and the only place for a white man—only it had changed a lot in the six years he had been away. At first he hadn't noticed, but there sure was a change. Things were different; the people were different; they didn't used to be so—so narrow and contracted. Seemed like they'd gone back a notch, and he'd just have to get used to them all over.

He ground the cigarette stub into the black soil that he might not set fire to his barn, and let his eyes wander to the tree-fringed horizon, only half a mile away; it occurred to him that half a mile was a pretty decent-sized outlook, for God's country. He liked God's country—it wasn't that—but God's country was so blamed little! He felt, sometimes, as if he daren't turn around quick, for fear of bumping into something.

He went slowly across the meadows to his father's home, listlessly wondering if her pansy-bed had amounted to anything this Summer. By "her" he mentally referred to Myrtie Westman, on the upper Marias, in Montana. Queer, how a fellow's thoughts will drift.

That night he dreamed of the Block Seven line-camp, and of the gray wolf howling on the ridge above the shack,

and Chan shuffling the cards with a little, swishing click, playing solitaire.

When he woke in the morning, and saw the ruffled, dotted Swiss curtains at his window, he somehow felt cheated. He gloomed around the place all day, and barely escaped having to swallow a pint of boneset tea because he wouldn't eat.

That night he dreamed again: of riding in the face of a sweeping prairie wind that lay flat the grasses where it passed; of working in the dust and the uproar and the tang of smoke in branding time. Of eating his breakfast, cross-legged in the grass, with his plate in his lap, while others laughed and talked around him—and talk was not of crops and drought and the price of butter; it was the wide, wide language of the range-land.

He woke with a queer ache in his throat, and he would not meet his mother's anxious eyes when she asked if he were sick.

Chan, playing solitaire in the dusk of the first stormy day of late November, felt a gust of keen cold swoop in with the opening of the door. He looked up, stared blankly, and scattered the cards recklessly.

"Lonesome, by all that's holy! When did yuh drop down, man?"

Their hands met and clung in the grip of friendship. "Hit the home ranch this morning, Chan, and come right on over. They said you'd just come over to hole up for the Winter; guess I'll help yuh hold it down."

Chan stooped and began picking up the scattered deck. "What'n hell brought yuh back?" he asked curiously. "I thought——"

"Lots uh things." Lonesome went over and poked at the flames, and they spat sparks at him quite as spitefully as ever. "Myrtie Westman, for one thing. Corn-fed angels kinda get monotonous, Chan."

For ten long breaths Chan said nothing. He was shuffling the deck abstractedly. Then:

"Myrtie and me are going to be

married in the Spring," he said slowly. "I was going to write and tell yuh."

Lonesome leaned on the rough log mantel and stared down into the flames. Chan mechanically counted off thirteen cards, laid them to one side, and dealt four, face up, on the table before him. He glanced side-long at the tall figure before the fire, and at the impassive profile with the firelight throwing upon it a wavering, red glow.

The figure turned and walked to the door, threw it open and stood looking out, his nostrils distended to the sweep of the wind. Before him the ridge hunched up against the bleak skyline, and a pale, swimming moon washed the steep sides of it in uncertain light. On the top a gray wolf howled plaintively the hunting call. Across on

the far side a coyote yapped back impertinently.

Lonesome laughed, deep in his throat, and turned back to the fire. "You'll have a good wife, Chan, and maybe yuh deserve her more than I do. But anyway, yuh can't marry off these hills and coulees, and—and all that, and take 'em away from me, thank the Lord! I got a cinch there."

Chan looked up at him quickly, and came over to where he stood. "I'm almighty glad to see yuh back, Lonesome," he said simply, with a hand pressed lightly on his shoulder.

Lonesome raised his head and listened to the wolf, as one listens to the music one loves. "Chan, it's a good place to be—Montana," he said, and rolled a cigarette contentedly.



## THE ECHO

By Edward Wilbur Mason

AT evening, when the shadowed earth is still,  
 And herds wend homeward down the quiet lane,  
 Then wakes the echo to impassioned pain,  
 Roused by the nightingale and whippoorwill.  
 Immortal Ruth of song! she leaves the hill  
 To glean the sheaves of sad and lovely sound  
 Dropped in the tender airs of twilight round,  
 By these frail bards whose breasts with sorrow thrill.

So, roving in the silences of Time,  
 Fame lists, like Echo, only to those souls  
 That sing in loneliness and grief sublime,  
 Whose music from the heart of sorrow rolls.  
 And ah! how rich her spoil of Keats' sweet woes,  
 And Shelley's pain, like wind that spills the rose!



"WHO is your favorite composer, Boggs?"  
 "Liszt."

"But Mrs. Boggs never plays Liszt!"

"She can't; that's why he's my favorite composer."

# OF COMMON CLAY

By Temple Bailey

THE coolness of that corner of the old garden was proverbial, so that in Coalport to say "as cool as old Mrs. Cartwright's garden" was to express all sorts of refreshing possibilities.

It was called "old Mrs. Cartwright's garden" in deference only to a revered memory; but all of the dead mistress's customs were kept up by her daughter, and on hot days the tinkling of ice in the tall glass pitcher of lemonade formed a daily accompaniment to the sighing of the slight breeze in the branches of the ancient oak that threw its shade over the stone wall, and to the splash of the fountain where a bronze cupid rode a marble dolphin.

"It's heaven, after the heat outside," little Miss Kemp said emphatically, on a Summer afternoon, as she dropped into a low willow chair, and smiled at Elizabeth Cartwright, who, in another low chair, smiled back at her and handed her a palm-leaf fan, and poured lemonade into two slender glasses.

"If it had been anyone else but Elizabeth Cartwright," Miss Kemp said afterward to a coworker in the church, "you'd have thought she knew what a picture she made, with that bunch of purple fleurs-de-lis on the table, and her white dress and shady hat, and the sun through the leaves making little gold checker spots all over her. But her mother always entertained there, and when Elizabeth was only a tiny tot she used to pass the plates of cake to company."

But no hint of this summing-up appeared in little Miss Kemp's shrewd countenance as she sipped her lemon-

ade, and wielded her fan and told Elizabeth Cartwright her troubles.

"It's the Pressy family again!"

"Again! Oh, dear!" Elizabeth leaned forward with a movement that expressed at once solicitude and interest. "Has the father been drinking?"

"No, it isn't the father this time—" Miss Kemp paused to increase the effect of her announcement, "it's the girl."

"Virginia?"

"Yes."

"Oh, poor child!"

Miss Kemp set her glass down and gave a sharp exclamation of protest. "Don't pity her," she said bitterly, "she doesn't need it. She's married."

"Married!"

"Yes." Little Miss Kemp was reveling in the sensation she was creating. "And the man's a—mountebank." She wasn't quite sure of the word, and she explained hurriedly, "He goes around the country selling tins from a wagon."

"Oh, is he a bad man?"

"Well, you can imagine—living in that irregular way." Miss Kemp fanned herself violently. "And after all of our teaching, too."

Elizabeth untied the strings of her hat thoughtfully. "Virginia is such a sweet little thing—and her family is so dreadful—"

"Well, they've been on the church poor list since the year one," Miss Kemp complained, "and Virginia is the first one that has ever even tried to earn a decent living—and now— But it just carries out my theory that blood will tell."

"Will it?" Elizabeth's hat was off

now, revealing the glory of the red-gold braids that framed the pale oval of her face. Her hair was the one startling thing about Elizabeth Cartwright. Otherwise her beauty was essentially delicate, aristocratic, unobtrusive, but her hair when she was in a crowd drew all eyes toward her, and crowned her with distinction.

"Will it?" she repeated musingly. "I wonder what I should have been if I had been raised like Virginia—in that dreadful tenement."

"You!" Miss Kemp had a sense of shock. "You are not made of the same clay."

But Elizabeth was looking at her with inscrutable gray eyes. "I wonder—" she began, and then shifted the subject. "I wish Virginia had come to me first," she said.

"She didn't come to anyone," Miss Kemp stated. "She knew we wouldn't approve, and she wanted her own way."

"Poor girl! She hadn't had it often—with that father and mother," and Elizabeth leaned back in her chair with a little shudder.

Miss Kemp stared at her.

"Elizabeth Cartwright," she cried, "I believe you are defending her."

"Oh, *no*!" Elizabeth sat up with a start. "Only it is nice to have your own way now and then, isn't it, Miss Kemp?"

"I'm not sure," said Miss Kemp grimly. "My experience has been limited."

"I know," Elizabeth's smile flashed comfortingly back at the little woman, "you always think of everyone else."

"What did Virginia say?" she continued. "Did she make any excuses?"

"Yes. She cried," Miss Kemp squared her shoulders at the recollection, "and I said, 'It's too late to cry now, Virginia,' and then she burst out, 'I don't care; he has a horse and wagon, and he is going to drive me through the country, and we are going to live out of doors all Summer, and I can pick flowers and have all the sunshine I want, and I won't hear the bang and rattle of that old factory any more—

you don't know how I hate it—how I hate it!'"

"Oh, poor child!" A soft wave of red swept Elizabeth's cheeks. "Why didn't we know that—how she felt? I might have had her here oftener."

"You might not!" Miss Kemp's tone was emphatic. "You have done enough for that family. And other girls work in the factory, and I am sure Virginia was getting along very well."

"But it was humdrum. It's the humdrum that kills." Elizabeth caught her breath sharply. "Isn't it?"

"Virginia was getting along very well," Miss Kemp had little sympathy with some of Elizabeth's rhapsodies, "and I had hoped that she might find a nice young man some day, and marry him and be respectable."

"It's too bad," Elizabeth tried to console her, "that you should be disappointed, but maybe they will be happy—and respectability isn't everything—not Coalport respectability."

Miss Kemp eyed her sharply, almost suspiciously. "I never heard you talk that way before, Elizabeth," she complained.

The girl laughed with a blush and a certain tinge of self-consciousness. "Well," she said, "you know people's ideas differ, and we are so narrow in Coalport."

"Who taught you that we were narrow?" Miss Kemp's question was a challenge, and Elizabeth's laugh was tremulous as she fenced.

"Oh—nobody. But Coalport's narrowness hasn't anything to do with Virginia, has it, Miss Kemp?"

Virginia's case, however, had faded into insignificance before the opening vouchsafed Miss Kemp to speak on a subject that was at present a titbit for Coalport gossips.

"Maybe it has," she said slowly. "What you call narrowness Coalport calls proper pride. And no woman should marry beneath her, Elizabeth."

Their eyes met, and the barrier went down. "You mean me?" Elizabeth asked, and her slender fingers with the old-fashioned ring were twined tensely in her lap.

Miss Kemp hesitated for a moment, and then caught Elizabeth's hands in her own. "I shouldn't have spoken—but people are talking, my dear."

"I know." Elizabeth stood up, shaking Miss Kemp from her with a restless movement. "And because Coalport has always thought that the Cartwrights are a little lower than the angels, I must go on and on, living in this old house with Aunt Jane, doing the things that my mother did before me, and my grandmother, and my great-grandmother, living the same life, meeting the same people." Suddenly she stretched out her arms in a gesture of passionate protest. "Why, I am like Virginia—I want to get out—I want to get out."

Miss Kemp stared at her.

"I am sure you used to travel with your mother," she said.

"Yes, we went to the Springs, and we even went abroad, but Coalport ideas and Coalport standards followed us, and I came back as I went, knowing nothing of outside things and outside people."

"Then where did you——?"

"Meet him?" Elizabeth sat down again, and tapped the table with nervous fingers.

"Yes."

"At the Springs, the year before mother died. Oh, you, you couldn't understand why I liked him, if I talked for a year! He was big and strong, and he rode a great deal—alone. And he had a lot of dogs. People didn't take him up very much. You know it's a great place for Coalport people, and he wore his clothes badly, and twisted his English now and then. And that was unforgivable. We overlook moral lapses and spiritual lapses in Coalport, but our clothes and our grammar must be perfect!

"I hadn't met many men then, except Coalport men, and three had proposed to me, and if I had accepted any of them, I should have poured tea in Coalport for the rest of my life, have gossiped in Coalport, dined in Coalport, and in the course of many dull days have died in Coalport, and

have rested at last in the tombs of my ancestors in Coalport cemetery."

She flung her head back and looked at Miss Kemp defiantly, and, her chair brushing against the blossoms of the clematis vine on the lattice behind her, was showered with silver-white petals.

"And he was different. When he talked he said things. And it was such a relief after Coalport twaddle. He made his money in the Klondike, and the story of his life there and on the plains was like Robinson Crusoe used to be to me, when I was a little girl.

"I didn't talk to him much—mother didn't care for him, of course—he wasn't from Coalport. But he had a little dog, a fox-terrier, that used to sit with her head against his knee, and he treated her as gently as if she had been a child—and we got to be great friends—the dog and I. Mother didn't mind my knowing the dog; and after a little I got to know the master, too, and—and—then mother brought me home——"

Her voice died away in a little sighing breath. Miss Kemp had been carried away in spite of herself. She loved romance, and came back with a jerk to the proper sense of Coalport proprieties and Cartwright traditions.

"He comes very often." Miss Kemp's remark was half-question, half-assertion.

"He comes every day."

"Your mother would not have liked that."

Elizabeth's gray eyes were wistful. "No, that is the only thing that hurts. But there were some things about me—that mother didn't understand, and he never came while she lived."

"I should like to meet him," Miss Kemp said gravely. "I am your mother's friend, and you haven't introduced him in Coalport."

There was a breathless pause, and then Elizabeth, with her face flaming, flung out, "I am ashamed of him, Miss Kemp!"

"Elizabeth!"

"Yes, I am. And it's little and mean and narrow and Coalportish, but I can't help it. When we are alone I

like him, and I am happier than I ever am with anyone else. But he is awkward socially, and when I think of passing him along the critical line of Coalport I positively grow cold."

"Then you should not encourage him to come here." Miss Kemp was voicing the already expressed sentiments of Coalport.

Elizabeth shook her head obstinately. She was very pale now.

"I may decide to marry him."

"Feeling as you do? Oh, Elizabeth!"

"We could go away."

"Would he make up to you for all you would leave behind?"

"For Coalport?" she said satirically.

But Miss Kemp would not back down. "For all that Coalport represents to you, my dear—your distinguished family, your social standing, your place in our hearts."

Elizabeth was touched by the affection in the little woman's voice.

"I know," she said brokenly. Then a spot of red burned in each cheek and she spoke with a certain embarrassment. "Sometimes I don't understand myself—but he is so masterful. Coalport men aren't masterful, you know. They just ask you to marry them, and if you say 'yes' they buy the ring, and if you say 'no' they go and hunt up another Coalport girl. But he—is different."

"In what way?"

"I think—that for him—there is only—one woman."

There was something in her face that held little Miss Kemp silent. "She loves him," was the revelation that came to her.

In the knowledge of such a catastrophe she felt that there was nothing to be said, and she rose and picked up her parasol. "I must go," she began, and then stood uncertainly.

Elizabeth rose, too, and picked up a pair of scissors that lay on the table, and bent to cut some roses for Miss Kemp to take with her. The red spots still burned on her cheeks, and as she moved down the walk, snipping here and there, with her snowy ruffles sweeping around her, with her crown

of wonderful hair, in her tall and slender young beauty she was the embodiment of all that was best in the family at whose shrine poor plain, middle-aged Miss Kemp worshiped.

"My dear," ventured the little lady, as they came to the gate, "I haven't asked you about his grandfather." That this, the first question on Coalport lips, should have been left until the last was significant of the questioner's agitated state.

The dawn of a smile appeared in Elizabeth's eyes. She dropped her hand affectionately on Miss Kemp's shoulder and patted it.

"I don't believe he had a grandfather," she mused. "I've thought sometimes I'd lend him a few of mine."

But the subject was too serious for Miss Kemp to joke upon, and looking down into the troubled eyes Elizabeth read there something that struck against her heart and echoed her own forebodings.

"Oh, Elizabeth, don't—don't," was Miss Kemp's appeal, as she stood outside the gate. "You won't be happy, Elizabeth. You won't be happy, dear."

When she had gone the words repeated themselves with the force of prophecy, as Elizabeth watched the dumpy figure in the hot brown silk go down the glaring street.

"You won't be happy—you won't be happy." It was the common sense view of such a marriage. But she shivered a little as she closed the gate, and stood looking through the iron bars like a prisoner, or like a hapless princess held by some dire spell in an enchanted garden.

Back of her the shadows of the old mansion seemed to threaten her future. Even the garden seemed to presage gloom. She had seen so many roses live there—and die. And so many roses would yet live—and die in loneliness.

As she turned away from the gate, she heard on the hard asphalt the quick "tap, tap" of trotting hoofs, and along the sunlighted street came a small covered cart, with red wheels,

drawn by a round brown horse. By the side of the horse ambled, with lolling tongue, a bandy-legged bulldog, and sitting on the front seat of the cart were a man with a florid complexion and a girl with a hat wreathed with red poppies.

The cart stopped and the girl sprang out. Elizabeth opened the gate with a cry:

"Virginia!"

The girl laughed, as those laugh who have learned happiness newly. "Oh, Miss Elizabeth," she said, and laughed again, joyously. "Oh, Miss Elizabeth, I'm married."

Elizabeth kissed her impulsively. "How pretty you look," she said.

"I'm happy," Virginia bubbled over. It was as if all the pent-up youth in her had at last found an outlet. "Oh, Miss Elizabeth, we've been out in the country all the morning selling tins, and we had lunch at an old farm-house, and the lady gave us bread and milk and apple-pie, and Jim paid her with a dish-pan and an egg-beater."

Her elation was so infectious that for the moment it seemed to Elizabeth that dish-pans and egg-beaters were the most delightful things in the world.

"This is my husband," Virginia announced, as the florid man, having hitched the little horse, came forward with the bandy-legged dog in attendance.

Virginia's husband was overcome by shyness in the face of such a presentation. He managed to murmur something as he shook hands, and Virginia, to relieve the situation, introduced the bandy-legged dog.

"This is Bobs," she said. "Oh, Miss Elizabeth, you don't know how I've always wanted a dog. And Jim gave him to me for a wedding present, and he's going to travel with us." The bandy-legged dog, sighing content, flopped down on the walk and panted.

"Come over to my corner, and tell me about it," Elizabeth said, and led the way to the table by the fountain, leaving an order at the house as she passed.

Once there, and with Virginia's

tongue running on in ecstatic details, Elizabeth observed the husband and felt the force of Miss Kemp's criticism. He was not an eligible specimen from the Coalport point of view; Coalport young men were mostly neat little clerks who gave an impression of careful if economical gentility. There was nothing genteel about this man. His hands were rough, and his face was burned and reddened by exposure. But there was about him a wholesomeness that appealed to Elizabeth's fancy, and his eyes, as he turned them on his pale little wife, had in them a gentleness that argued well for Virginia's future.

"We are going to travel all the roads around, and we are going to sleep in the cart, and cook some of our meals in the woods—it's like a fairy tale, Miss Elizabeth. Oh, if you only knew how I hated the factory—and how good Jim is—" and the little high-strung Virginia broke down and cried.

"It's just because I'm so happy," she insisted, as Elizabeth and Jim and the bandy-legged dog united in comforting her. "I know Miss Kemp thought it was awful, but she doesn't know—she doesn't know——"

She wiped her eyes after that, and drank her lemonade, and fed little sponge-cakes to the bandy-legged dog, and laughed again that bubbling laugh that was so full of youth and happiness.

And when it was time to go, she sent her husband on ahead, and lingered to say a last word to Miss Cartwright.

"I was awfully ashamed of him," she confessed. "You know Coalport, Miss Elizabeth. But he is so good, and this morning I just made up my mind I'd show them what I thought of him, and I made him drive me down Main street, and I bowed to everybody, sitting right on the front seat of that cart, and I didn't mind it a bit."

Elizabeth caught her by her shoulders and gave her a little affectionate shake. "Did you really do that, Virginia?" she asked eagerly. "You brave little thing."

Virginia shook her head. "It wasn't brave at all," she said, blushing; "not



when you love—anyone, Miss Elizabeth."

"Yes," Elizabeth agreed softly. "Oh, Virginia, I hope you'll be happy, happy, happy." And Virginia, suddenly wise, interpreted this outburst in the light of her own feelings.

"I wonder if she's in love, too, Jim," she mused later, as they jogged down a shady lane toward the sweet-smelling fields that slept under the stars. "Well, I do hope she'll marry someone as nice as you."

With the coming of youth and love and happiness, Miss Kemp's croakings had faded from Elizabeth's mind. The shadows had fled from the old garden, and the gate was open, and between the tall posts stood the princess with flushed cheeks and shining eyes—waiting.

The westward end of the street was a blaze of gold, and after a little a figure loomed black against its brightness—a man, strong, with a self-reliant carriage, and a swing in his walk that told of a free life out-of-doors, and an acquaintance with the saddle. Close at his heel pattered a small fox-terrier that glanced up at him now and then with adoring eyes.

When he was so near the gate that Elizabeth could have touched him by stretching out her hand, she turned and fled to her cool corner of the garden. He followed and found her in the willow-chair, with the clematis vine dropping its silver snow over her gown and hair.

"Why did you run away?" he asked, smiling, as she held out her hand to him.

"I—" she began, and stopped trembling. Into her face came a look that banished commonplaces, the look that an hour ago had silenced Miss Kemp.

"Elizabeth," he whispered, in the light of that great revelation. "Elizabeth—"

"Yes," she breathed, as if in answer to a question.

Her eyes did not droop before his. It was as if a princess surrendered.

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His face grew white beneath the brown. He dropped on his knee beside her chair, and for one worshipping moment hid his eyes against the laces of her sleeve. He was a strong, simple man of the plains, and for him she would always be a great lady.

But a little later, as they walked together down the rose-bordered path, he asserted himself masterfully.

"When will you go away with me? I want to get you into my life—I want our days in the saddle—our nights under the stars."

She stopped to pin a rose to his coat before she answered. Her head was bent a little. What if Miss Kemp's call had been after Virginia's?—was the question that for one dreadful moment darkened her mind—would it have made any difference in her decision? She raised her head and looked at him. The softness of her hair brushed against his chin. His eyes met hers adoringly. As yet he could not believe in his good fortune. She seemed still his lady of dreams.

"We won't go yet," she said slowly, surely. "I want you to see something of Coalport."

He gave a light laugh. "But I have seen Coalport."

"Oh, you've seen the streets, the stores, the outsides of the houses. But I—I want to show you to the people of Coalport."

He did not notice the reversion—the subtle change of meaning. He hesitated. "I haven't any parlor tricks, you know. I breathe better out of doors."

"But you will go with me?"

"To the end of the world."

She laughed—an echo of Virginia's fluttering joyousness of the afternoon. "I am not going to take you so far," she said. They had reached the porch and stood in the shadows of its great columns. "But in the morning I want you to drive me down Main street, and then—"

She stopped and laughed again, blithely, but the secret was all her own, and not even in this time of happy confidences to be imparted to him.

"And then?" he questioned, not understanding, but entering gaily into her mood.

"We will go and call on Miss Kemp," she said, and drew him laughing with her into the house.



## OPPORTUNITY

ONCE upon a time there was an Opportunity that went around looking for a job.

He nudged a college graduate, but that individual was engaged in playing football and didn't stop.

He tapped on the window to a bookkeeper who was toiling in an office adding up musty figures. That person noticed him and his face turned pale. He was afraid that Opportunity had come to take away his job, so he motioned him away.

Opportunity then went to a young fellow who had saved up a couple of thousand and was on his way to Wall street.

"Come this way," said Opportunity, pointing to a narrow side street.

"I don't need your company," said the young man. "I have a straight tip."

Opportunity knocked at the doors of a politician, a lawyer, a doctor and a merchant. He tried the old, the young and the middle-aged. But none of them would have anything to do with him.

He became a wanderer on the face of the earth, and the longer he wandered the greater he became.

But no one noticed him or had anything to do with him.

One day, when he was full-grown and in his prime, he made up his mind to advertise in the papers. So he inserted the following card:

Situation Wanted. By a first-class Opportunity.  
First come, first served. Address this office.

In the course of twenty-four hours he had applications from the college graduate, the bookkeeper, the young man back from Wall street and all the rest of those who had scorned him. They lined up in front of him and anxiously waited for his decision.

But this time Opportunity was independent.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you are all too late. Why didn't you take me before?"

"Because," they chorused back, "we never believe anything unless we see it in print."

Opportunity bowed.

"Very well," he said as he turned his back. "Now that the Press has endorsed me, and you want me, suppose you give yourselves a run for your money?"

He darted away from them, and, impelled by a common impulse, they started to chase him. For years and years they followed him, but never caught him.

They became old and weak and useless, but still they followed. And finally, one day when their trembling footsteps could carry them no further, they faltered and stopped. Then Opportunity came back and stood near them.

"For years," they said, "we have chased you and have not caught you. What shall we do now?"

And Opportunity replied as he waved his hands in fond adieu:

"Now, gentlemen, go chase yourselves!"

# DREAM OF KINGDOM

By Edwin L. Sabin

IN his slouch-hat, blue shirt and khaki, apparel torn and stained, self unshaven and brown, the Prince of Haerenhofen drew bridle-rein at the gate of a Colorado ranch-yard, and dismounting, strode stiffly through. The two ranch-dogs—one black, one yellow, both shaggy—barked lustily at him; for very dusty, with the gray dust of alkali and 'dobe mingled, was the Prince of Haerenhofen. Dust is no respecter of person—possibly because of its intimate knowledge of the same. Dust, you understand, claims kinship with prince and peasant, high and low. The Prince of Haerenhofen being leveled by the dust as well as by attire, the dogs barked and the ranch woman spoke through the screen without opening the door.

"Good evening," addressed the Prince of Haerenhofen, gallantly removing his hat.

"Evenin'," responded the woman, inquiringly.

"Is this the Jones ranch?"

It was.

"They told me down the road that perhaps I could get lodging here for the night."

"Well—I don't know. Wait a minute an' I'll see."

The figure behind the screening—a figure embarrassingly indistinguishable—retreated, disappeared entirely; and upon the prince's ears floated, from back-doorward, the shrill appeal:

"Pa! Oh, Pa!"

There was a murmur of colloquy, and presently "Pa" himself stumped through the house and confronting the prince, eyed him.

"We don't keep no road-house," volunteered Rancher Jones, "but we're

willin' to accommodate people when we can. Jes' bring your hawss in through the big gate yonder, an' I'll show you where to put him. Better take him down to the creek first, I guess, an' water him."

By their mutual endeavors the weary horse having been watered at the creek, conducted to the rude shed, there divested of saddle and bridle, haltered in a stall and given his measure of oats, Rancher Jones proceeded, conscientiously, to find out who and what and why was this his guest.

His persistent questioning brought him the information that he was about to feed and house Mr. Brooks, of New York, out with a party making a camping trip through the mountains, temporarily separated from guides and companions, evidently having followed a wrong trail.

If Rancher Jones might have encompassed that which his guest was suspecting, he would have beheld at the moment, in a camp fifty miles away amidst the cedars and thoroughly equipped, from sleeping-bag to six-shooter, patent stove to medicine chest, two annoyed woodsmen and a worried royal tutor vainly hallooing, vainly listening, vainly reconnoitering, vainly waiting. He would have beheld a camp perturbed. The principality of Haerenhofen is not large—although it is larger than these legendary principalities which occupy only a novel of the season—but it was too large (considered the tutor) to get along without even the youngest member of its reigning family.

"I *thought* that hawss looked like one of the Baker boys' hawsses," declared Rancher Jones, rubbing his

bristly chin reflectively. "They guide lots of people through this country, them boys do." He yawned. "Well, supper'll be ready soon, now. We'll go in an' wash."

And he shambled forward, leading from the stable shed entrance—the spot of the investigating conversation—to the kitchen, where, in a sizzling atmosphere Mrs. Jones was bustling about.

"You can set down any time," she directed.

"This is Mr. Brooks, ma," introduced Rancher Jones as a matter of form.

Mrs. Jones nodded; the Prince of Haerenhofen bowed, heels together—pausing in the wiping of his parched face upon the crash towel thus to do.

"He didn't tell his name at the door," commented Mrs. Jones in an impersonal way. "Well, supper's ready. Set down. This is my daughter, Mr. Brooks."

The prince again bowed, heels together, this time to a girl who entered from the room beyond. Mrs. Jones placed the final dish upon the table and, the prince intuitively selecting his chair, all sat.

The table was bountifully spread with milk and coffee, hot biscuits, fried steak, boiled potatoes, beets and beans, various preserves; in the centre a plate of yellow cake, the thin slices warped from much exposure.

Mrs. Jones was short, perspiring, generous of girth, stringy of hair, heated of face; Mr. Jones was small, leathery, bandy-legged, with long nose and ferrety eyes close together, as if to watch it. But the girl was slim, round-waisted, full-throated, oval-countenanced, taper-fingered, fresh-skinned, with dead black hair and eyes as black, but liquid and set almond-wise below her smooth, white forehead. About her was a glimpse of the Orient strangely reminiscent here amid the Colorado Rockies. The prince gazed with open admiration; for he was of the Continent—of Paris, Berlin and the court of Haerenhofen; and, furthermore, this was the first sprig of fair

womanhood that he had seen, even seen, in six weeks. The girl ate as if oblivious of him, save occasionally assisting some dish his way. The talk ran upon matters indifferent.

"Havin' a successful trip of it?" asked Rancher Jones.

"Yes, so far, but one tires of camp life after six weeks straight," said the prince—his resolve taken.

"Troubled with mosquitoes?"

"They devour us alive!" asserted the prince emphatically.

"We have 'em bad, too, but we keep 'em out with screens all we can," said Mrs. Jones. "Must be the wetness. We've lived here twelve years an' I never remember so much rain."

"Good for the crops," remarked the prince tentatively.

"Yes, if we could get anybody to work an' help us get 'em in," snorted Mrs. Jones indignantly. "Seems like nobody wants to hire out a ranch hand, any more, in this country."

"They all want to be cowboys," averred the girl quietly.

It was the first word in conversation that she had spoken, and the prince was prompt to take advantage of the opening.

"They prefer to be cowboys? Because they can earn more money?" he queried directly of her.

"No, they think it's bigger to ride," she asserted quickly, scornfully. "A ranch hand is too slow for them."

"They get better pay ranchin', an' get it easier; but they have a notion that chaps an' spurs make a man," declared Mr. Jones.

"Clara'd better not talk against the cowboys, though," said Mrs. Jones, with good-humored banter.

"Why?" The prince was obligingly curious. "She has a friend among the cowboys?"

"Well, one comes 'round here pretty often. Seems to find a lot of cattle straying in this direction."

The prince glanced keenly at the girl; flushing, she bent her face low over her plate.

After supper the girl and her mother were busied in the kitchen (which was

also the dining-room). In the sitting-room, adjoining, the prince was entertained by Mr. Jones amidst the gradually deepening obscurity, with a discourse upon stomach trouble (Rancher Jones's affliction was not, insisted that worthy, common "dyspepsy," but was intricate and mysterious) and the alleviations therefor. The prince was unable to proffer much advice, and could only listen, ostensibly sympathizing but inwardly fuming, to a recital of the effects of soda—a teaspoonful every hour, and of lemon, of pain-killers, of bitters, of strong tea, and of that latest discovery, Two Drops, recommended by the postmaster at Oro.

"Two Drops, that's what I'm takin' now," informed Rancher Jones. "An' if you ever have anything the matter with your stomick, you try that. Two drops a day; it'll cure anything, I believe."

"But your daughter," said the prince, desperately essaying; "I should judge that she is well. She does not inherit from you?"

Rancher Jones grunted and shifted in his chair.

"As I was tellin' you," he proceeded, refusing to be diverted from himself, "Two Drops is what I'm takin' now. And—"*ad infinitum*.

Somebody entered, from the kitchen; the prince looked expectantly, but it was only Mrs. Jones, who, with the protest: "What are you folks settin' in the dark for!" lighted the lamp upon the table in the corner.

"Any time you want to go to bed I'll show you up," hinted Mr. Jones to the guest.

"I'm ready now," replied the prince, yawning.

Rancher Jones, procuring from the kitchen another lamp, piloted the way upstairs and turning into a room placed the lamp upon the bureau, mumbled a good night and trudged off.

"Have breakfast about seven," he called back.

Standing before the mirror, the prince for a moment gazed at himself, and, as if not displeased, despite his

roughened, unkempt appearance, smiled with subtle satisfaction. He turned and examined the bed. It looked clean and comfortable, the covers had been hospitably opened for him. He extinguished the light, in the semi-darkness undressed, and throwing wider the window, deposited himself with a sigh of relief between the blankets.

"She is pretty, and more than pretty," he murmured, stretching his limbs and settling for sleep. "This is better than out among the rocks and trees and only men around. I will stay. I need the change."

Soon he slept; although a prince, he even snored.

"You calculate on gettin' back to camp today?" queried Rancher Jones at breakfast. "Can't mistake the road, from what I've told you."

"No," announced the prince calmly; "I believe I'll stay here a while, if you can keep me, and have no objection. How much would you ask me for board?"

"How long would you want to stay?" demanded Rancher Jones.

"Until I am rested up. That bed felt pretty good after sleeping out for six weeks."

"I'll have to charge you ten dollars a week for keep of yourself an' hawss," stipulated Rancher Jones. "That's the least I could do it for. Or, say—you stay the Summer through an' help me on the place! I'll give you a dollar an' a half a day an' find you. You look good an' strong. Ever do any ranchin'?"

"No," answered the prince gravely. "I'd make a poor ranch hand, Mr. Jones. I'll pay *you*; that will be more satisfactory to us both."

"Well—jes' as you say," granted Rancher Jones, grudgingly. "But I do need another man about the place awful bad."

"You'll have to put your daughter into the field," suggested the prince, lightly, with a smile for her.

"Clara? No, we aren't expectin' her to dig ditches like some ranchers do their women-folks," spoke Mrs.

Jones. "She'll have plenty of work to do when she's a rancher's wife, without workin' herself to death now."

"Then perhaps you can spare her enough to let her show me some of the country," averred the prince, still smiling upon the girl.

She colored with her ready flush.

"You have your own horse, haven't you?" he said. "And I have mine."

"She'd rather be riding than anything else," declared Mrs. Jones. "It's the only thing about ranch life that she likes, somehow."

"You will be my guide?" persisted the prince, of the girl.

"There isn't much to see," she faltered, thus assenting.

"Oh, she'll show you. She knows this country better'n I do," avowed her father. "Do you want any word sent to camp? Somebody'll be comin' along during the day, goin' that way, like as not."

"I might let the camp know where I am," remarked the prince, easily. "But we won't go to any bother."

The two horses grazed near, their lines trailing. Below was the river, flowing amidst the mesas brown and chalky white, its course denoted by the fringing willows and cottonwoods. Upon the edge of this their own mesa sat the prince and the girl, the blue sky above, the valley beneath. The girl's eyes roved hither and thither; the prince's eyes scanned her profile—its lines of firm chin, straight nose, rounded cheek and long lashes showing attractively under the rakish sombrero. What both girl and prince saw was pleasing.

"Isn't it plain, where they've irrigated!" she said. "See—the light green is the irrigated part, the dingy green is just sage and greasewood. Water is the only thing necessary—and yet you wouldn't think so."

"Like love to the heart, eh?" responded the prince softly. "The ground needs only water to yield, and the heart needs only love."

The girl flushed.

"I don't know," she stammered.

"Certainly you know," he rebuked, but gently. "You know, and I know, for we are man and woman. And besides," his tone was lighter, but none the less insistent, "Mr. Ewing, that cowboy who kept you so long at the gate yesterday—he will tell you, or hasn't he already told you?"

The girl slightly pouted, and tossed her head defiantly.

"Dick Ewing! He takes a whole lot for granted, and so do mama and papa. Those cowboys think they're so smart."

"You would prefer a rancher, then?"

The girl hesitated.

"Ranching is better than riding the range," she answered; "especially, when a man has a wife."

"Mr. Ewing might be persuaded, I should think," advanced the prince, watching her searchingly.

"He says that he is going to stop riding, and take up some land," she admitted.

"I believe that I will stay out here and turn ranchman," vouchsafed the prince deliberately.

"Why don't you?" she demanded, turning quickly. "There is so much government land, and anything along the river is good. That piece right below papa's place has never been filed on," she continued, more shyly. "People think that it has, but it hasn't. And I know of some other quarters, too. Papa's ranch made two thousand dollars last year."

Three days of constant companionship, riding and sitting together in the open amidst the pines and the cedars and the sage, rightly bended, may effect much; and now the prince, with tender boldness, slipped his arm about the girl's waist.

"Would you be glad to have me, mignonne? You and I together—we could make out of this sage and greasewood a paradise. Water—and love; those would be our allies. Or would Mr. Ewing object too seriously!"

"I'm not engaged to Mr. Ewing; it's just talk. Really it is," said the girl huskily and earnestly.

"I forgot. You do not like ranch life. Is that true?"

"It depends," she faltered, coloring still more richly.

"A king—one might here be a king," murmured the prince, gazing out over the vista of mesa and valley, his eyes kindling, his arm tightening about the slender waist. "To make one's own estate, to be independent, to live under the sky and encinctured by the hills in this the West where each man is his own master, to subdue the wilderness to one's sway, to require only water and love—that is to be king, indeed."

"Somebody must be in a great hurry," spoke the girl, who had heard, uncomprehending. She pointed. "I do hate to see anyone ride a horse so hard. Don't you?"

She darted him a shy glance.

The prince had been peering at the horseman racing, amidst dust, along the road below. He hastily arose.

"It is a message for me, it must be—Paul does not usually ride that way." He strode to the horses. "Is he stopping at the ranch?" he asked, gathering the lines of the nearest.

"N-no—yes; yes, he is!" exclaimed the girl. Standing, she was troubled. "I hope it isn't bad news for you," she ventured, with vague apprehension. Her dream had been rudely shattered.

He caught the other horse, and with that cavalier grace upon which he insisted, overruling her protest he aided her into the saddle. He mounted.

"Come," he bade; and together they galloped down the trail, into the valley, ranchward.

From his lather-flecked horse, at the stirrup of which he evidently had been impatiently waiting, a man advanced to the prince and handed him a note.

"How are you, Paul?" accosted the prince, and ere opening the mis-sive he attended to his companion—she swinging lithely down through his hands.

With his bridle-reins upon his arm the prince read. He refolded and thrust the envelope into his pocket.

"Pardon me," he said to the girl. "Do you wish to go right back, Paul?" he queried.

"I ought to." The reply was brusque, but tentative.

The prince tied the two horses by the lathered one.

"I will put them up," he said to the girl.

She slowly went into the house; he walked along the fence with the messenger.

"When did it come?"

"This morning early. I brought it on at once."

"I see you did." The prince laughed grimly. "And how did you know that I was here?"

"Word reached us last night, fortunately." The speaker paused.

"Why did you do this?" he accused. "You must have known what worryment it would give us, George—you to disappear out in these mountains!"

"Honestly, I was lost, Paul. I kept on until it was too late to turn back, and so I stopped with the Joneses. I sent word; you must credit me with that."

"Yes, sent it in a leisurely way. You might have come yourself."

The prince shrugged his shoulders.

"But, dear Paul—you saw the girl, didn't you?"

"This is no time nor place to ply your gallantries, George. They may be admissible on the Continent or in the cities, but such things don't go out here. And you've upset the camp and about spoiled the trip."

"Don't scold, Paul," protested the prince humbly.

"The idea—a man of your station acting like a half-fledged stripling, running off from camp—"

"I was lost," murmured the prince.

"—and putting up at a ranch, at such a ranch, just to amuse yourself with a common rancher's daughter. And what are you going to do now?"

"It is a very good ranch, and while she may be a common rancher's daughter, she is a rancher's very uncommon daughter," objected the prince mildly. "What am I going to



do? An hour ago, Paul, I was going to be a rancher myself. The piece of land next to her father's is still to be settled, or there is other land yet open farther away. She knows where. With water, a quarter section of land out here, means two thousand dollars a year; with love it means more; it means a home. I—we were going to try it, Paul. It would have been ideal, and I should have liked it. I would have founded a real kingdom—the kingdom of a home. But now—I cannot have that. It must be the kingdom of state, not the kingdom of love. I may direct only the destinies of others, not my own. And the fields over there have long been cultivated. So Ernst is dead, is he? I fancied that some day he would go off suddenly, but I had hoped that he would leave an heir. Poor Ernst!"

"Well?" stimulated Paul abruptly.

"You will return to camp this evening, Paul?"

"I shall. Can I get another horse here? There is moon enough to travel by."

"You can take mine; he is comparatively fresh. When we move camp how do we get out?"

"We move camp the first thing in the morning; we can catch a stage at the town of Oro on the next morning. We must; the stage runs only three times a week, and there will not be another until Monday. By stage we reach the railroad—sixty miles."

"So," murmured the prince. "Oro—that is forty miles from the ranch. I will meet you at Oro in time for the first stage."

"Your Highness!" expostulated the other.

"But you can move camp without my help—you and those two guides. And I cannot go with you tonight, you see. Your horse is too tired, I am giving you mine——"

"But we can find another."

"And I have some things to attend to here."

"So I thought. You had better come along with me, George."

The prince shook his head.

"No," he said. He smiled wistfully. "I must be courteous, Paul."

"Lengthy leave-takings are not the fashion out here," retorted Paul flatly. "People mount and ride away, that is all." He stopped, and resumed sharply: "If you stay there will be no foolery, George?"

"No foolery."

"Things are different where you live and where—they live, George."

"I know that, very different, and to the disadvantage of where I live, I am sorry to say."

"You will meet us at Oro in time for the stage day after tomorrow?"

"I give you my word."

"And you will come alone and leave no promises? For God's sake do nothing and say nothing that will——"

"You have my word that I shall be the man and not the prince, Paul. You misunderstand—naturally, but you need not fear."

"Well," grumbled Paul.

The horses grazed near-by, as before; and below the mesa's edge was spread the same landscape, but nevertheless appearing different, for the lights and shadows upon it were those of morning, whereas on the day preceding they had been those of afternoon. The prince and the girl sat side by side.

"Was it bad news?" she repeated.

"Yes, very bad," he answered, slowly. "I am called away to be a king."

She stared at him. Her look of puzzled inquiry made him smile, and again slipping his arm about her waist he held her thus.

"That is why I am going," he continued. "But I would rather stay here."

"Then why don't you?" she asked naively. "You were to be a rancher."

"I know. And I suppose that you think I am not a king or I would do as I please, eh?"

"We had a regular English lord who went through here last year. He stayed. He has a ranch over on

Green River," she replied. "Doesn't what you are to be king of make you greater than an English lord?"

"Maybe," he said. "Listen: Yesterday, so far as I knew, I was only a prince, with nothing but the title; I was worth as much as Mr. Brooks of New York, as Prince George of Haerenhofen. But last evening I learned that I was a king. My brother had died. So I must go back. When I was a prince I was master of myself, if of naught else; now that I am a king I am master of many other things, but not of myself."

"But a king is bigger than a prince, isn't he?"

"Only in name. Listen, *mignonne*: Yesterday I would have stayed here; we would have taken that ranch of ours, you and I; we would have made it a kingdom. I was speaking in earnest. We would have mated in this Western wilderness; you would have loved me, and I you, and we would have raised our home. But that is not to be. I must go, and you must stay. The state has decreed and the divine right of kings is but a sorry right, after all."

"Take me," murmured the girl, hanging her crimson face.

"You would not be happy, *mignonne*. You would have no more glorious rides; you would not be permitted to saddle your own horse nor to ride where you listed, to ride alone nor to ride even with me; not to breathe a breath of air—God's free air—unattended. Walls would hedge you about. Such mountains as Haerenhofen has you would behold only from pave and casement. You would die of——"

"I would be a queen, wouldn't I?"

"Yes; queen of Haerenhofen, condemned to wear the title, unable to doff it."

"But I would have you," she implored.

"No, *mignonne*, you would not have me. Henceforth the state has me. No one is less a king than a king; no

one is less a king's wife than his queen. Listen, *mignonne*. I must go back, but without you. I shall marry, for that is the duty of a king. I think that I know of her; she is picked out——"

"Is she pretty?" asked the girl, jealously.

"No, she is not. She is cross-eyed and she is lame of a foot. There are other blemishes. But I shall marry her—or, rather, be married to her. And thou, *mignonne*, thou wilt marry that red-headed cowboy who stops at thy gate. He will turn rancher; I will turn king. I would that we two might exchange places—and wives. Yonder over the sea, I shall rule my kingdom and try to rule it well. I shall intrigue, I shall scheme, I shall perhaps war that Haerenhofen may be greater, that its citizens may benefit. Here, upon thy ranch, thou and thy husband will guide thy kingdom, making the earth to blossom and spreading the civilization of honest work in God's out-of-doors. I shall have children, that they may inherit of my kingdom; so wilt thou, that they may inherit of thine. Sometimes we shall think of each other, *mignonne*—but not to regret; rather to remember that we are each doing the work assigned to us. We shall never see each other until our work is finished."

The girl was crying.

"I would cry, too," he said. "But I may not. I am a king. My tears are my people's, not mine."

It was noon, when, after saying good-bye, the prince mounted at the ranch-yard gate.

"When you come this way again stop in and see us," bade Rancher Jones cordially.

"Thank you," said the prince gravely.

"I hope that you will have a good trip," voiced the girl.

"Thank you," said the prince gravely.

She suddenly turned and ran into the house. The prince rode away.

# THEY OF EDEN

By Mary Stearns Heffenger

EVE yawned. Her even teeth, white as a hound's, clicked together viciously, and she closed her green eyes on the weary monotony of the Garden. She was bored, as usual. When she had finished her morning quarrel with Adam, and both had used up their list of uncomplimentary adjectives, there was nothing left to do all day. Eve was troubled with a vast deal of superfluous energy; she had already explored the Garden and tried in vain to climb the encircling wall, whose top leaves seemed quite high enough to tickle the clouds; moreover, there was no work to be done, and Adam was a dull playfellow.

"Wish he was another, just like me," pouted Eve. "What's he here for, anyway? Great, heavy, cross creature! What if he can pick me up and put me into the brook! He sits still so long sometimes I think he's going to turn into a bush. Perhaps he's trying to go back—back!"

A dreamy wonder came into Eve's voice. She, who had found words for her babbling confidences but a little time ago, had none to express the curious memories of her past. When life seemed most a mistake, she amused herself by trying to lose it. She would snuggle down into the warm grass, rest her chin in her brown little hands and strive to become a part of the inanimate Garden. Slowly she seemed to be feeling her way backward into the brown dust—star dust, from which she had originally come. So now she dozed and dreamed, lizard-like, stretched out in the sunshine, until

she felt herself becoming less than animal—a simple plant, rooted in the all-creating earth.

As she spread her lithe fingers before her, an iridescent dragon-fly bit her on her bare heel. She sprang up. About her, stiff palm-trees stretched in regular lines; fat and complacent beasts paced between them, and upon their branches roosted birds, so well fed and inactive that they appeared to be stuffed and wired. Above, arched a cloudless blue sky. Eve lifted her head and let the sunshine warm her closed eyelids. Her whole being was tense with revolt against this horrible place. Just then a chuckle of satisfaction came from the big spice-tree further on.

"Adam! What can he be doing?"

Eve darted along the path and stopped to peep out from a giant fern. Adam was bending over something, walking about it, patting it.

"I'll climb up into the spice-tree, and look down and throw nuts," whispered Eve; and she swung herself swiftly from branch to branch, crossing over to that side of the tree under which Adam was at work.

Out of some damp clay he had moulded an image of himself, red berries played the part of eyes and gave the flat countenance a charmingly commanding, not to say fierce expression. He was arranging a palm-leaf mat for hair, when Eve's sylvan peal of laughter rang through the Garden. He glared up at her through the great, snake-like branches; then he proceeded with the work, muttering beneath his breath.

Eve slipped softly to the ground and peeped over his shoulder.

"You're very clever, Adam," she remarked seriously.

He turned to look at her suspiciously; and again her laughter startled the heavy birds above them.

"It looks exactly like you. What a pity I didn't stay about, so you could do me; the statue would be so much nicer looking," she giggled sweetly.

Adam turned his dark eyes to her face and stared so long that she grew a bit frightened.

"Eve," he said, "it's odd, but you do remind me of the monkeys, the way you chatter and make faces and climb. And you're quite as troublesome. You never do anything yourself——"

"But I'd like to! I'd love to have something to play with!" Eve wandered away dispiritedly toward the centre of the Garden. "I'll go and look at the Tree," she decided.

The Tree was all of a golden yellow, its trunk covered with great scales, its leaves sword-shaped. At the very top a cluster of rosy apples reared itself into the still air. Eve sat down, and gazed upward. A delicious tremor of excitement quivered through her. Here was the door into another world; here, waiting for him who dared and risked all, was the most fascinating of opportunities.

The Serpent slipped out from under a stone to study her. Eve whistled to him, and tickled his green-and-gold head with her long fingers. She did not know that he was different from the other beasts of the Garden, but, subtly, she felt the attraction of his power, his intellect, while the logy, overfed animals repelled her strongly.

"Pretty Serpent, how much alive you are! That's the way I feel, too. I wish you could talk! and you'd be so much more fun than Adam. How cunning and bright your eyes are! I'd like a lot of them to wear around my neck!"

The Serpent blinked guardedly. He was intensely amused. This poor, silly little girl was the quaintest thing in Eden, and Eden itself struck the Serpent as a delicious experiment.

He had known from the first that it could not succeed.

"Just run on the same antiquated plan as heaven—with far more dangerous material, too," he mused. "Why, this little Eve alone is worth half-a-dozen stolid, unprogressive Archangels!"

By-and-bye Eve fell asleep in the midst of a fern-patch and the Serpent glided away. Returning, he pricked her wrist with his sharp tongue, and when she sat up, rubbing her eyes, he began to dance the dance of Whirling Spheres, spinning round in emerald spirals, leaping into the air like green lightning, twirling about on the tip of his tail and altogether making himself so fascinating that Eve followed him out into the green glade beyond the Tree, where he suddenly slipped into a hole and left her to discover Adam. He was standing with his face upturned to the sun, his black shadow lying motionless behind him. To Eve his statuesque pose and tense expression were unfamiliar and terrible.

"Adam!" she gasped. He did not hear her. "Oh, Adam!" she cried a little nervously.

A great sigh, like the heave of a mighty wave, lifted the obsession from Adam's soul.

"Eve, why did you stop me?"

"Why, I had to; you would have been turning into something strange, I know. It's not good for you to be like that."

"It is, though. Something in me was growing. I felt it. Look!"

She turned. Following the movement of his hand she saw the image raised on a platform of earth from which it stared haughtily over the Garden. Adam went to it, patted the sloping sides of the pedestal and blew away a little black feather that had fallen upon the palm-leaf hair.

"Look, Eve," he said earnestly. "If I hadn't made it, it wouldn't be here!"

She stared. "Of course," she replied seriously. Then she laughed. "Why, of course—if you hadn't made it, it wouldn't be here!"

Adam did not lose his portentous manner.

"Well, Eve, here am I—and you, and the beasts and the Garden. How did we all come here?"

"You mean—you mean," she gasped, "that somebody made us! In the beginning, of course, for we've grown a lot since then! How lovely! Where is it, do you suppose? Do you know, I've often felt as if someone were watching me! Oh! do let's go and hunt this very minute! The Jungle behind the banyan-tree is the darkest place. Hurry, Adam!"

Eve, already afoot, found the old protest against her leadership in Adam's eyes. Both, however, were too happy in their new interest to pause for the usual quarrel; and Eve hastened her short steps to keep up with Adam's long ones.

By-and-bye they came to the Jungle; something among the branches rustled and moved away, leaving a vibration of foliage behind it. No animal of the Garden had energy to run away, so this must be the unseen presence. Although the underbrush tripped them, and they jostled together in the narrow places, they hurried on, enjoying themselves mightily.

"We're gaining," gasped Adam, and his tall form, entangled in a heavy vine, crashed forward into the stream which bounded that end of the Jungle. He scrambled to his feet, and they both leaped over the brook, to find themselves gazing into the innocent face of the Serpent, upturned in inquiry.

"Well, I must say, we'd forgotten all about you!" snapped Eve tartly.

"Oh, you think I don't count, eh?" sniffed the Serpent to himself.

"Did you hurt yourself, Adam? I'll wash the mud off your face. Just sit down on the bank while I fix you."

There was a compelling gentleness in Eve's usually independent manner, and Adam sat down, meekly, and fell to meditating on the mystery of things. He quite forgot bustling little Eve, who gathered a few bright flowers and twined them about his head. He

was not a bad plaything, after all. Her red, pursed-up lips and absorbed eyes caught his attention, and when her glance moved downward from the crimson lily nodding over his left ear, a little chirrup of satisfaction escaped her.

"Oh, Adam, you look so pretty! I noticed today when you were staring at the sun how straight your nose is!"

"Humph!" snorted Adam, seizing the wreath with ungentle fingers.

"Oh, don't, don't—please don't!" entreated Eve.

"You sha'n't make a fool of me!" he declared; and the Serpent, with a guess at the future, sneered among the tall ferns.

Eve burst into tears as Adam pulled off the wreath. Adam sat stunned at this new phenomenon. Her face was quite wet, and how ugly she looked! Why, she had been rather pretty before! He dropped the flowers upon her curls, clumsily trying to divert her. Eve looked up, and caught his intent gaze. Her face uncrinkled itself; a look of surprise relaxed her features, then a slow delight curled them into a smile.

"Oh, Adam, wouldn't you like to do my portrait?" He turned his eyes quickly from her face, like a schoolboy caught watching an apple, and replied, nonchalantly:

"Well, I suppose I might try."

For a time the portrait proved a blessing to them both. Eve, however, weary of being still, invented a game which consisted in making faces at Adam while he poked the clay, and trying not to let him catch her as he glanced back at his model. This tried Adam's nerves, and had some influence on the expression of the statue.

"That look like me!" shouted Eve, her vanity touched for the first time.

"Well, you make so many faces—" retorted Adam.

"Nonsense! You make me ugly to match your own statue!"

"You ungrateful, conceited little—" Just here a slightly overripe pomegranate struck Adam's chin. He plunged after Eve, pursued her into a

little grove, and grabbed wrathfully at her, as she dodged between the tree-trunks. Her forehead struck a low branch and she found herself sitting on the ground with Adam glowering over her huddled form. A new and terrible desire shone out of his eyes, and she grew white and faint with fear. Then: "I wouldn't touch you, wretched, weak creature!" she heard him mutter as he strode away.

She stumbled to her feet and wandered disconsolately through the Garden. The fear had gone, but something as terrible had taken its place—hate. Her physical inability to injure Adam infuriated her. She threw herself down in the shadow of the Tree and wept desperately in the brown earth.

And thus the Serpent found her. He coiled his tail carefully under him and sat studying her intently. By-and-bye her sobs grew slower and less violent; then she looked up and saw him.

"There you are again!" she exclaimed indignantly. "You're always wriggling round the Garden, looking so wide-awake about something! What are you staring at the Tree for, anyway? It's not your Tree. It belongs to us, and if we felt like eating the apples we would! What are you sticking out your tongue for? We wouldn't give you any. Go away, I don't like your expression!"

Eve threw a fig at him, whereupon he wound himself about a low branch of the Tree and began to wriggle slowly upward, pausing to look back at Eve with an impertinent sparkle in his fiery little eyes.

"You—!" she shouted, and was up to the top of the Tree before he had ascended half-way. She seized one of the apples and snapped the little stem that held it to the cluster. Then she came down, waving the apple triumphantly at the Serpent as he followed her to the ground. Deliberately and scornfully he arranged himself before her, and Eve, holding the apple between her thumb and forefinger, stared back at him with snapping eyes.

"You think I don't dare to eat it,

you ridiculous little worm! Well, I'm going to! I'm not afraid of anything in this Garden or outside it!" The apple was warm and smooth and of a rich golden yellow, burnt to sunset pink on the upper side. She turned it round and round, her defiance tempered with a vague uneasiness as to the future. Since she was venturing on something of an experiment, it were well to be deliberate and draw all pleasure possible from the mysterious fruit. She selected the rosiest spot, and, fixing her eyes on the Serpent, set her sharp teeth into the crisp juiciness, then let them slip together over the severed portion.

What a peculiar taste! Sour, bitter, hot, sweet, smooth, icy—the white transparency of the Garden flamed into crimson chaos; the stillness grew a Babel. Eve threw herself to the ground, clutching the grass and hiding her frightened eyes in the silly flowers. Terrible, wonderful, the fulness of the revelation stunned her; she felt—life; she understood, as yet, hardly anything of all that she felt. The knowledge burst into her child's brain, dazzling rather than lighting her great ignorance. She was horribly alone in this new world of sin and of righteousness.

"Oh, Adam, Adam!" she sobbed, and springing up, rushed away to seek him.

"Eat it, Adam!" she cried when she found him. "Eat it quickly, quickly!"

The tops of the tall palms twisted and bent, strangely. From somewhere an icy breath blew into the quiet of the Garden, and sang dismally among the branches. Eve looked into Adam's troubled eyes, then both turned toward the shadow that was looming up from the horizon. It was blotting out the brightness of the turquoise dome, that always before had been unchangeable. The birds fluttered uneasily above them, and a big, sleepy leopard slipped his nose into Adam's hand. Far away, something growled and rumbled horribly; and the shadow grew and grew, and twisted itself into giant shapes that seemed to stretch out menacing arms. One after another, the beasts drew near to the silent man and woman

and moaned and huddled against one another. Suddenly out of the devouring darkness above them, a sword flashed. Eve shrieked, and her voice lost itself in the angry thunder that followed. Clinging to Adam, she looked up into his face, shining palely out of the darkness; no longer the heavy puzzled face she knew, but changed into quiet strength and courage. Another voice spoke from the cloud; and a giant blast of wind, loaded with hail, struck obliquely across the Garden. Great trees crashed down before it, and the Eden dwellers heard, over their heads, a sound like the hurtling of vast wings. With one impulse they turned their faces from the Wrath that pursued them, and fled through the blackness. Rushed forward by the storm they soon reached the wall, and beheld where the wind had cut a wide gateway for them; through this fled Eve and Adam and every beast that had dwelt with them in the Garden, and after them all, the Serpent.

The tempest died slowly away. Over their shoulders they beheld the sword-thrusts of lightning still pierce the foliage of Eden, but already the terrible voices were silent. Before them stretched a wild country; rough hills, breaking into rocky crests and steep valleys choked with thickets, and across it all no path, but only the tracks of the beasts from Eden.

They of the Garden stood hand in hand, gazing out over their new dwelling-place. Suddenly Eve turned and threw her arms about Adam's neck.

"Oh, Adam, it's so big!" she sobbed. "It doesn't end anywhere!"

He put his arm clumsily about her shoulders and opened his lips to speak. But no words came that could express his feelings for the new life that awaited them both. His muscles tightened and the blood danced in his brain. Fear, curiosity, expectation, tenderness, wonder, passed through him and were lost in a great satisfaction—the joy of the contest, life.



## AT A WEDDING

"SOMETHING OLD"—the mother-in-law.  
 "Something new"—the bride.  
 "Something borrowed"—the minister.  
 "Something blue"—the bachelors.



**H**E—I quarreled with Maud about her allowance.  
 HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW—Yes; she told me you 'quarreled about nothing.



"W<sup>H</sup>AT is his fortune, in round figures?"  
 "About \$000.00, I should say."



# PARABLE OF THE ROSE-BUSH AND THE LOVING WOMAN

By Laurens Maynard

A WOMAN whose heart yearned for something of her own to love found growing in the garden of her home a beautiful rose-bush. Daily she tended it with watchful care, and to the growing plant the sun seemed brighter for her smiles. With gladness it spread out its roots, firmly embracing the rich home soil, and joyously it put forth buds which opened into blossoms, filling the garden with their fragrance and delighting the eye with their beauty.

And the Woman took great joy in her treasure and watched its growth with pride; and from time to time she plucked a flower and laid it in her bosom, and its fragrance warmed her heart by day and perfumed her dreams at night. And for a time she took joy in that her neighbors and the stranger who passed her door stood long by her garden wall, watching her rose-bush and marveling at the beauty of its blossoms and the richness of their fragrance.

And the plant continued to grow in strength and in beauty, and as often as the Woman plucked a blossom another grew in its place; and she missed nothing from her own happiness because of the joy that others had of her treasure.

But one day she saw another woman reach over the wall and lovingly take a single blossom into her hand, that she might draw it closer to her face and breathe its fragrance. And then, although the stranger did not offer to pluck the flower, her heart grew bitter against her and she said to herself, "It is my own treasure; what should another find in it!"

And she went and dug up the bush and took it within her house and held it close to her breast, and said to it:

"You are mine, and mine only. I will not leave you any longer where others may see and covet you. The garden is too distant and too cold. I will keep you close in my arms, and for sunshine I will give you my smiles, and I will water your roots with my tears."

Thereafter she held the rose-bush jealously in her arms and lavished upon it her smiles, and her kisses, and her tears. But in a few days the blossoms had fallen, and the leaves were withered, and the plant was dead.



## A SUMMER NOTE

ONE touch of julep makes the whole world Kentucky.



"DOES she move in the best circle of society?"  
"She does, but only on the circumference."

## MY DAPHNE'S TOUCH

By John Kendrick Bangs

WHEN Daphne touched me in those ancient days  
Now veiled so deep in Time's obscuring haze,  
From tip to toe, a thrill went through me then  
And made me feel the happiest of men;  
For Daphne's touch was like the vital spark  
That turns to light the essence of all dark.

But now, alas! how changed indeed is all!  
When Daphne touches me 'tis dreary Fall  
That fills my soul, not that sweet sense of Spring  
That to my heart that contact used to bring—  
Not that I love her less, that is not it,  
My love for her has waned no slightest bit.

But now the touch suggests no amorous thrills,  
But rather steep and unpaid modiste's bills  
The which I have to meet, with prospect grim  
That my lean purse shall ever grow more slim:  
In short, the "touch" that these days comes to me  
Brings visions to my eyes of bankruptcy.

O Lovers everywhere who bill and coo,  
Pray heed this warning note the while ye woo.  
The joys of courtship all are yours by right  
And ye do well to love with all your might;  
But take the word of one who's been all thro' it—  
When you are wed stop billing, and just coo it!



## AT THE END OF THE SUMMER

THE MAIDS—The chances we had!  
THE MEN—The chances we took!



## AT THE SEASIDE RESORT

NEWCOMER—I don't see anything here to rave over.  
OLDTIMER—Wait until you get your hotel bill.

# PROFITABLE INVESTMENT FEATURES OF LIFE INSURANCE

By S. A. Nelson

**I**NVESTMENT is defined as "the act of investing or laying out money productively, or converting capital especially in a permanent manner; also the money or capital so invested, or the property invested in." Life insurance investments are in a distinct class of themselves. They differ from investments in real estate, railroad, industrial and other securities and in business enterprises of one kind and another. They should always be differentiated and considered as in a separate class. Two of their important advantages are stability and permanency. Many ordinary investments accessible to the average investor are to be condemned, but when care is exercised in the selection of a company, the life insurance investment, principal considered, is as safe and stable as a deposit in a savings bank. The whole life insurance structure is based on its permanency. It is not attended by the risks that usually accompany the average investment. Yet another advantage is accessibility to every investor, no matter how large or small his resources may be. Life insurance appeals to the large as well as the small buyer, but it is more important to the latter. A life insurance investment presupposes that the investor in calculating the returns makes due allowance for the protection he receives in being insured. When this is done the advantages of such an investment, when made in a sound institution, The Prudential Insurance Company, Newark, N. J., for example, are apparent. The buyers of securities, whether they be stocks or bonds; or insurance, whether they be life or fire policies, are notoriously careless in investigating and understanding exactly what they buy. Recently convertible bonds of the St. Paul and Union Pacific railroad companies matured. Their owners had the option of convertibility into common stock

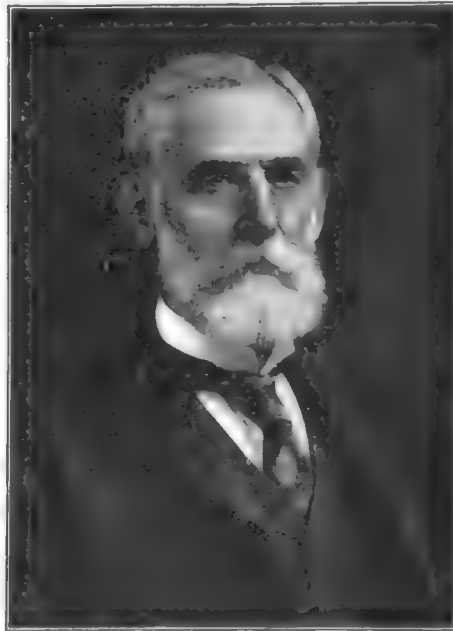
or accepting a fixed cash return. The former was the more profitable operation, and yet in one instance holders of almost \$1,000,000 in bonds failed to take advantage of their opportunity, simply because they had failed to read and understand the text printed on the bond. The same statements apply to insurance, and every buyer of a policy should investigate and understand exactly what he is buying.

In this country the path of the small investor is strewn with difficulties. Financial adventurers make elaborate plans to trap him with fraudulent schemes; the large dealers in investment securities ignore him, as do the municipalities which dispose of millions of bonds on "all or none" bids. Had the millions of dollars exchanged by small investors for worthless mining stocks and stocks in other bankrupt or unsuccessful industrial corporations been diverted to the purpose of life insurance, the sum total of national happiness would be much greater. The amateur speculator in shares on margin, the bucket shop proprietor and the fraudulent seller of sham investment securities, to say nothing of the promoters of "get rich quick" propositions, have wasted what in the aggregate must be a vast sum of money.

The small investor of today finds much trouble in making and caring for his investments; he is at a disadvantage when compared with the large investor whose investments may, and often do, cover a wide range, and almost invariably life insurance is included in the list. The highest grade bonds can be had by the average investor in a retail way on a retail price basis, which means that he must pay the highest market price. Large issues of such bonds are generally sold on "all or none bids" to syndicates which in turn sell them at an advance to estates and individuals. Sold "over the counter," the buyer of a \$1,000 bond pays

more when he buys and accepts less when he sells than the large investor, because he trades in an "odd lot," and when in final possession the interest return is decidedly small; and if it is large he has the questionable satisfaction of recalling the adage that "the greater the returns the greater the risk." As this becomes more of an investing country, which it is destined to do, it is probable that the best bonds will be sold in much smaller denominations than at the present; in the meantime, the small investor finds that he receives scant attention from the leading dealers in prime investments which are above suspicion.

The savings bank, the building and loan association, the real estate venture, each has advantages and disadvantages for the small buyer. Large investments are based on stability and permanency, interest yield, and negotiability. The Prudential Insurance Company, just as a savings bank, is a very large investor. It buys securities of the highest grade in a wholesale way. The investor in a policy participates in those purchases to the extent of his policy, less the proportionate cost of insurance operation of the company. Recent events have caused buyers of insurance to give more careful scrutiny to the cost of insurance, the form of policy and the strength of the company issuing the certificate. This is as it should be. It will lead to a better understanding between the principals to the transaction. There will be less sensationalism in the sale of investment insurance and a keener appreciation of the value of a small but safe interest return, when combined with insurance protection. The Prudential Insurance Company invites a careful scrutiny of its conditions, methods and plans of insurance.



U. S. Senator John F. Dryden  
President, The Prudential Insurance Co. of America

It is essential to the welfare of the average small investor, although he does not always realize the fact, that he should be insured against his own weaknesses. Anyone with any Wall Street experience whatever knows that many men would be much better off in a financial sense if their investments were permanent. Possessing readily salable investments, they have been tempted to embark in speculation or to exchange a sound for an unsound investment. When a man invests in life insurance he regards that investment as a permanent trust fund. It is not something that he

wishes to sell in order to get into something that is supposed to be better.

It is the best thing, under Prudential conditions, that he can buy. When a man invests in life insurance he begins to cultivate that most important habit, the saving habit. Saving becomes compulsory. Some of us have started at interesting periods in our career to insure ourselves, and we know, too, that it is a simple and easy matter to divert this special saving fund into a channel of disbursement.

A bill must be paid, there is a promising speculation, or a necessity arises which we had not considered,

when, behold, we have spent that which formed the basis of our most excellent resolutions. The holder of a life insurance policy, however, first of all, makes adequate provision for his payments, and having done so feels that his duty has been well performed, for he knows that his savings are safe. He knows that he has acquired protection for his family and a permanent investment that is not to be dissipated to satisfy a caprice or the friend "with a tip."

Conservative bankers and brokers know that it requires courage and conviction to recommend investments, especially for small investors; in fact, nowadays it is easier to condemn than to praise. It requires no courage to recommend life insurance for one already has the conviction, many of us having had the experience that teaches us that in at least one sense it is the wisest of all financial investments. The average business man usually employs three plans of investment that he regards as safe, permanent and profitable. They are: (1) the ownership of his home; (2) the savings bank account, and (3) life insurance. He often differs regarding their order of merit or their relative importance. He may own one and not the others, and often the one he owns to the exclusion of the others is the insurance policy.

A moderately prosperous New York merchant has a number of small investments consisting chiefly of railroad stocks and bonds in lots of 10 to 50 shares and 1 to 5 bonds. He owns his own home, which is in Brooklyn. Not long ago he was obliged to remove from Brooklyn and he endeavored to sell his house, but could only do so at a substantial sacrifice. Commenting on the loss he said: "The only investment I have that never worries me is my life insurance. How about my stocks and bonds? Well, you rarely get through a year without worrying about them. Instead of selling my stocks in 1902, or simply keeping them, I bought more at the top and now my interest yield is very small. Recently I sold several bonds of a terminal company at a loss and so the reinvestment problem is always with you. You often act on the opinion of a man whose judgment of security values is as superficial as your own. Life insurance protects a man against himself and that is a factor that many of us do not consider at its actual value."

On another occasion a perplexed investor remarked: "When one considers the number of railroad collateral trust bonds and the security behind them, he feels that it requires an expert to determine their value. As far as the newer industrials are concerned, their future value is problematical. So many contingencies enter into the calculation that the buyer must reckon on more or less worry as part of the bargain. Before

a new security ceases to be speculative it must pay regular dividends over a period of years that includes good times and bad. Having done that it sells on an investment basis and the interest yield is very small. The new shares and bonds which are based on prospective value and offered the investing public have no end and the investor of moderate means can employ no discrimination in considering them but must reject them all."

"I never realized," said another New Yorker recently, "what a good investment a life insurance policy is until my application was rejected."

The Prudential Insurance Company offers buyers of life insurance a number of policies including the whole life policy, the limited payment policy, the intermediate policy, the endowment policy, the guaranteed 5 per cent. 20-year insurance endowment bond policy and the 5 per cent. gold insurance bond policy. Industrial insurance, children's endowments and annuities are also issued by The Prudential. Considered in their regular order as follows, each possesses an investment feature peculiar to itself:

(a) The whole life policy is life insurance in its simplest form. Premiums are paid during life and the amount insured is paid at death.

(b) The limited payment life policy is a popular form of insurance. Premiums are payable for a determined period of 10, 15 or 20 years, or until death, if it occurs within the period. If the insured survives the period the policy is continued in force without further payment by the policyholder and the amount insured is paid at death.

(c) The endowment policy possesses an investment feature aside from the insurance. It enables a person to provide for old age; it inculcates the saving habit in young men, and when the policy matures gives him capital with which to embark in business. In the interval one is always insured and thus a two-fold object may be accomplished. It provides for the payment at the end of the endowment period to the person insured or the sum named in the policy, or the amount of the policy, in the event of death, to the beneficiary.

All the foregoing policies may be obtained

either on a non-participating basis or on the accumulative, five-year or annual dividend plans.

(d) The guaranteed 5 per cent. 20-year endowment policies also contain investment features aside from the insurance.

If the insured survive the endowment period of 20 years, the initial sum together with the accumulated guaranteed additions becomes payable to him in cash. Under the policy the sum insured is increased each year by a guaranteed addition of 5 per cent. If the insured die within the endowment period, The Prudential will pay the full value of the bond together with \$50 per \$1,000 of original insurance for each year's premium that has been paid; but if he survive the endowment period he will receive in cash twice the initial sum, and other methods of settlement are open to him.

(e) The 5 per cent. gold insurance bond policy provides for bonds issued in the single denomination of \$1,000 and in numbers from 1 to 100. The terms of the contract are simple and cannot mystify any one of average intelligence. The title of the contract is not "gold bond," but "gold bond policy" prefixed by the name of the kind of policy it may be, such as whole life, endowment, etc. Its distinguishing feature is the method of settlement at maturity.

The gold bond policy provides for the issuance of interest bearing gold bonds in lieu of a cash payment. The bonds are issued in amounts of \$1,000 for each amount of \$1,313 of insurance and bear interest at the rate of 5 per cent. of their face value (\$1,000), payable semi-annually in advance. The bonds are 5 per cent. bonds.

If a gold bond policy on the life plan be considered solely from an investment point of view, the question of net return on the money cannot, as a matter of course, be determined until the policy matures by death. If the policy be on the endowment plan and mature as an endowment, the cost of insurance protection should be allowed for in computing the net return.

The method of settlement by the issue of bonds is one of several devised to meet a demand, which while of considerable proportions is not comparable in volume to the demand for straight life insurance. The bonds after issue may be disposed of singly

or en bloc at a minimum selling price to the company issuing them.

On all the foregoing policies cash loans, paid-up insurance and other values are provided for.

(f) Children's endowment policies are based on the desire to make adequate provision for the education of a youth, to provide capital to start a young man in business or to give a daughter a dowry at marriage.

(g) Life annuities, sometimes called income policies, are more popular in England than in the United States: A man, aged 65, for example, can obtain from The Prudential for a single payment of \$5,000 an annual income for the remainder of his life of \$563.05 or about 11 per cent. per annum of the amount invested.

In conclusion it must also be remembered that policies today are more liberal in their provisions than they were 15 years ago. The writer is of the opinion, that the strongest views and the ones really worth having regarding the value and results of life insurance as an investment are those of policyholders in different parts of the country. Those interested, who care to pursue the subject farther, can obtain from The Prudential, as did the writer, the testimony of satisfied policyholders of varying ages and condition in widely separated communities.





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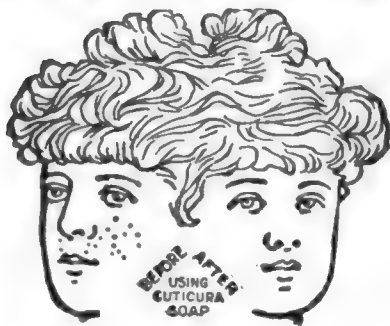
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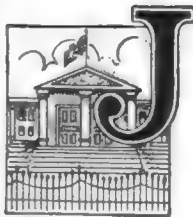
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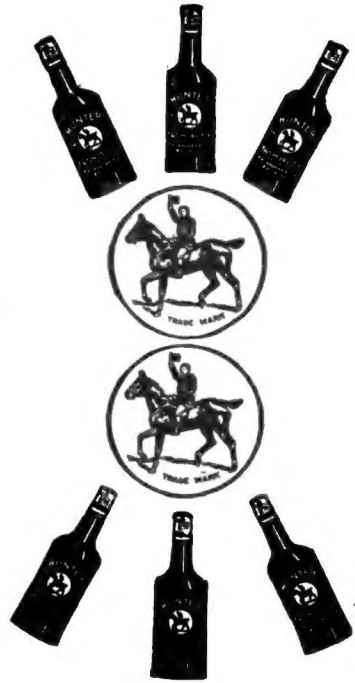
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